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DEMOCRATIC RAGE;

OR

LOUIS THE UNFORTUNATE.

A

TRAGEDY.

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A

TRAGEDY.

BY

WILLIAM PRESTON, ESQ.

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1793.

BRITISH MUSEUM
2 56
AUG

DEDICATION.

TO you, ye ſubjects of the BRITISH empire, happy, if ye know how to prize your happineſs, the author inſcribes this poem, in which he has attempted to illuſtrate the bleſſings ye enjoy, under your preſent mild and ineſtimable conſtitution; a conſtitution, the reſult of tempered firmneſs, and progreſſive wiſdom.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

Louis, King of France.
Duke of Orleans, otherwise Egalite.
Kersaint.
Sieyes.
Petion.
Santerre.
Robespierre.
Marat.
Lamoignon.
Clerk.
Paris.
Gaston.

WOMEN.

Queen of France.
Princess Royal.
Princess Elizabeth.

The Dauphin, a Child.

ACT I. SCENE I.

An Apartment adjoining the Meeting of the Convention.

Enter ORLEANS, *ſolus.*

Orleans.

OH pride, how dear thy price! and thou ambition,
Proud, groveling appetite, how doſt thou ſtoop!—
The great diſtinctions of my royal blood,
All levell'd in the duſt; and peaſant ſlaves,
Spawn'd by the mire, in ſtrange fraternity,
With princes mix, and ſoil their ermine robes,
With hard unhallow'd hands, by labour worn;—
But ſuch the path to pow'r, ſole worthy aim,
And conſummation of imperial man.

Buſtling thro' chaos, when the glorious vapour,
The fiery atoms, that compoſe my ſoul,
Uproſe a mind, ambition was infus'd,
The beſt ingredient; and the principle
Of new exiſtence: thence ſhe forc'd her way,
Thro' ling'ring ſeeds of earth, and tow'r'd aloft,
Intelligent, and vaſt; and ſtill, ſhe holds
The glorious tendency, that gave her being—
Aſcend, aſcend, thou fiery energy,
For ever mount, until, diffus'd in air,
No trace remains, to tell the world thou wert.

SCENE II.

Enter, to him, ROBESPIERRE *with* MARAT.

Approach, my truſty minions—do ye linger,
When precious miſchief labours for a birth?
What ſays our imp Gorſas? hath he ſublim'd
His preſs, that fruitful mine of maſſacres,
With fire unquenchable?

Mar. The tyrant's blood
Muſt ſoon be ſhed, and ev'ry root and fibre
Of freedom's glorious tree ſhall largely drink
The fatt'ning ſtreams, and vital force imbibe,
And wide and deeply ſtrike, and ſend aloft
The glorious boughs, to reach the ſtarry cope.

The ſpirits of the gallant train, that fell
On that illuſtrious day, around us crowd,
Or, hov'ring o'er our heads, with ſilent tongue,
Yet audible to ev'ry patriot heart,
For retribution call. Their glorious thirſt
No common draught requires. Oh, let them drink,
Drink largely, of the ſceptred miſcreant's blood.—

Rob. And they ſhall drink.—We have already lopt
The boughs, and ſuckers; undermin'd the root,
And naked left the trunk; th' unwieldy maſs
Stands tottering to its fall, and the next blaſt
Of popular fury lays it in the duſt.
Oh, thanks to Brunſwick! ſure, our guardian genius
Was buſy, when he wrote, to guide his pen.
Oh, better than a thouſand tongues divine,
Our cauſe he pleaded; in pariſian hearts,
He conjur'd up a raging thirſt of blood,
And gave it ſanction, by his own example.

Orl. Yes, ye are witneſs—ye, whoſe ſtreaming blood
O'erflow'd our priſons, when September's calends,
Eventful, ſet in crimſon, Brunſwick's pen
To ſlaughter doom'd you. If the parted ſhade
Survives the ſtroke of death; in dread array,
Ye muſter round his couch, and vex his dreams.
But, ſtill unſated, with the price of death,
With all the plunder of that cruel day,
Our blood-hounds crave; they cry to me, for gold.

Rob. Shame on the miſcreants! they have had their fill

Of tyrant blood, and ſhall not that ſuffice?—
Have ſeen the fall of proud ariſtocrates;
Their laſt convulſions mark'd, with gladden'd eyes,
And heard, with gladden'd ears, their dying groans;
And ſhall not that ſuffice? From ſeas of blood,
Up ſprings the glorious ſun, diffuſive dawn
Of civic power and broad equality.
And ſhall not that ſuffice?

Orl. Yet, we muſt own,
They have done worthy ſervice. All in vain
Th' inventive head may toil, and weave the web
Of mighty changes, if the daring hand
Conſecutive be wanting—to Rotondo,
And his tried comrades, do we ſtand indebted,
For victory o'er Louis; they have ſtript him
Of counſel and aſſiſtance.

Mar. 'Tis moſt true.
Vainly had our aſſociates cram'd the dungeons,
With Capet's faithful friends; vainly Gorſas,
With dark ſurmiſes, viſionary fears,
Plots, maſſacres, and counter-revolutions, fill'd
Th' unſteady populace; in vain, the walls
Of Paris, cover'd with proſcriptions, call'd
To ſummary revenge; unleſs theſe men
Had furniſh'd leaders for the paſſive crowd,
Ready to finiſh, tardy to commence,
The work of ſlaughter.

Orl. Say, have ye prepared

Our truſty inſtruments, zealous and loud,
To trace the city, clamour in the ſtreets,
Inflame the populace, and teach the crowd,
To thirſt for blood, and cry aloud for vengeance,
For inſtant vengeance, on the bloody tyrant?—
So call this harmleſs thing—this chriſtian log!
Remember, "all the blood of friends and foes
"Be charg'd to his account: the ſtate of France
"Concord or reſt, while hated Louis lives,
"Muſt never hope to know." The preſent hour
Brings on the dread appeal, big with our fate:
We fall, or Louis dies; and much I fear
The temper of the aſſembly, they will ſhrink,
In the dread criſis, from the crowning blow,
The conſummation.

Mar. We muſt work by threats.—
Oh, did not fear withhold the recreant tongue,
How many, at this hour, would ſtand avow'd,
Champions of tyranny.

Rob. Doubt not our zeal—
The mountain yet ſhall rage; oh thou ſhalt hear
Its bellowing crater roar, for Capet's death,
Infernal thunder, and diſgorge the flames
Of rage fanatic, and the rolling ſmoak
Of fearful prejudice. We have prepar'd
A pageant for the crowd, that ſhall to frenzy
Tranſport their ſpirits.

Mar. 'Tis a glorious thought.—

In vain, the aſſembly, with united voice,
Decrees the tyrant's guilt, if his adherents,
With moderation's name, and ſpecious forms
Of prudence, temp'ring patriotic zeal,
Conceal th' inſidious arts, that darkly work,
To ſnatch away the victim, on the eve
Of glorious ſacrifice.

Orl. Impart your aim.

Rob. We have array'd a ghaſtly multitude
Of hideous ſpectres, that erewhile were human;
A breathing aggregate of butchery.—
The lazar-houſe ſhall pour its tenants forth,
Diſmember'd trunks, that ſcarcely hold exiſtence,
To ſtrike the tender nature, with affright,
At mortal miſeries; the ſtripling, doom'd,
By one fell blow, to long decrepitude,
Propt by his weeping parents; hoary ſires,
Adding to wounds th' infirmities of age,
Borne on their childrens' arms; in litters ſome,
As ſpectacles of more diſtinguiſh'd horror,
And oſtentatious pain; next theſe, a band
Of childleſs ſires, and mothers, orphan babes,
And widow'd matrons; all, in doleful weeds,
With hair diſhevell'd, and with piercing cries,
Bewail the victims of that glorious day,
Our butcher'd brethren, butcher'd by the hands
Of cruel mercenaries—all, for blood,
Cry to th' aſſembly—for a tyrant's blood.

Mar. Many there are, that toil, with ſecret art,
To mar our beſt-laid ſchemes; while, by delay,
Adorn'd with moderation's ſpecious name,
They hope to fool us, and ſome moment ſeize,
Of weak relenting in the multitude,
To reinſtate th' anointed pageantry,
The fooliſh coſtly bauble call'd a king.

Rob. The fiery Lanjuinais, the good Rabaut,
That pious heretic, bold Manuel,
Kerſaint, more boiſt'rous than his element,
Keen Roland, charg'd with fury feminine,
With borrow'd talents and a ſoul transfus'd,
And cool Condorcet, that with rule and line
Would human actions mete, a remnant all
Of mongrel thinkers, party-colour'd zealots,
Ling'ring 'twixt night and day, with glance oblique,
To britiſh freedom lean. 'Twere ſure perdition,
Should they prevail, to all our dreams of pow'r.
But 'twill not be;—we have a leſſon given,
Of dreadful warning; wiſely, have infus'd
A ſalutary terror, that inſures
Completion of our hopes. Ev'n now, in thought,
I ſee thee ſeated high, I ſee thee move
The cords and ſprings, that wield the vaſt machine
Of democratic rage

Mar. What may this mean? [*Aſide.*

Rob. We muſt remove the philoſophic fools,
The ſcientific praters. Still, too denſe

Are moderation's ranks, compact with friends
Of proſtrate royalty; we muſt recall
The calends of September. Then, reveal'd,
Thou may'ſt aſſert thyſelf, diſpel the clouds [*To Orleans.*
That veil thy glorious preſence, and ſhine forth
Our great dictator, our illuſtrious Sylla.

Mar. Dictator, Sylla! o deteſted ſounds!
Firſt periſh all creation, ere this frame,
This little frame, in vile obeiſance, bend
Before the ſway of one, one like myſelf,
An individual man, the wretched ſubject
Of folly and diſeaſes; or betray
The claims, and majeſty, of the great pow'r,
Supreme, imperial, abſolute,—the people!

Rob. Well ſaid, volcanic mind; but knowſt thou not
That Sylla but ſuſpended, not deſtroy'd,
His country's freedom? to himſelf he took
Imperial pow'r, not, as a veſted right,
But a depoſit; having purg'd the ſtate,
Groſs and corrupted then, and largely drain'd
The rank blood from her veins, he gave her back
Her freedom undiminiſh'd, having made her
More capable of freedom. France muſt pour
More blood, more blood; o ſhe is yet too rank.

Mar. Let thouſand gaſping heads around me fall,
And bite the duſt; and thouſand mangled trunks
Around me ſpout with blood: all crimſon'd o'er,

Let me to freedom march, o'er ſcatter'd limbs;
And free remain; altho' I ſhould remain
The ſingle living thing, amidſt the wreck
Of crumbled empires.—I'll for freedom ſhout,
Altho' I ſtand in blood, ev'n to the lips.

Orl. Forbear this waſte of words; the preſent criſis
Demands our utmoſt care, to ſhape the meaſures,
Adapted to the moment.—Should th' aſſembly,
Unaw'd by menaces, delay the fate
Of him that we have doom'd, whoſe inſtant death
Is vital to our hopes—what then remains?

Mar. What then remains?—why, force muſt have its way,
Diſpenſe with legal forms, and ſeize the victim.

Rob. That may not be, unleſs Santerre combine;
And he uncertain wavers—'tis a vane
That points, as intereſt breathes; a golden key
Commands each entrance to his narrow heart.

Orl. Is he not gorg'd with riches?—Holds he not
Within his gripe, the plunder of the ſlain,
Ev'n half the wealth of Paris?—Brave we not
The public voice, for him; and ſtay the hand
Of rigid juſtice?

Rob. We muſt glut him ſtill;
New maſſacres, new plunder. Haſte, my lord.

Mar. How—lord!—we know no lord.—Egalite.

Rob. Well—be it ſo.—Haſte then, Egalite:
The preſent moment labours with our fate—
Clamours muſt ſilence eloquence; and rage

Baffle the wiſe, confound the reaſoner.
I, to Santerre, and work his ſluggiſh ſoul,
With motives fit to rouſe him. I'll preſent
To his baſe mind, for ever bent on gain,
Proſcriptions, confiſcations, gold, the god
That he adores.—Each to his ſeveral taſk,
And re-aſſemble at the Jacobins.

[*Exeunt* Orleans *and* Robeſpierre.

SCENE III.

MARAT, *ſolus.*

Ye too ſhall periſh, for I know you well;
Tyrants in embryo;—a Marius this,
And that a Cinna;—but the times demand them.—
'Tis their ambition that muſt purge the ſtate,
From ev'ry relique of nobility,
From ev'ry dangerous man, whoſe pride would build,
On worth ſuperior, or ſuperior wiſdom,
Claim to pre-eminence. All muſt be equal;
Or all no more are free—the pride of genius
Will ne'er ſubmit to herd among the crowd.
The pomp of words, the vanity of ſcience,
Will be diſtinguiſh'd—we muſt cut them off.
Wit, wiſdom, virtue—ev'ry head, that tow'rs

Above the reſt, deforms the gen'ral ſyſtem
Of broad equality, and tends to gain
Dominion o'er the crowd. Equality,
Be thou my god. To thee, I ſacrifice
Whole bleeding hecatombs; that buſtling fool
Shall be the prieſt; and, laſt, a choſen victim,
On ſome high day of ſolemn ſacrifice,
Shall bleed himſelf. With deadly hate, I view
Each haughty thing, that, in ſociety,
Would claim a place above me; and my place,
Save in the day of common anarchy,
Is low indeed; for, nature to my birth
Denied her bounties, ev'ry pow'r of mind,
And grace of perſon, that, with ſmooth attraction,
Advance her minions; and conſpir'd with fortune,
To mark me out, for pain, and indigence,
And vile ſubſervient ſtation; ſtigmatized me,
With want and infamy. Yet, in deſpite
Of nature and of fortune, I have gain'd
An envy'd rank; and wield the rod of pow'r,
To ſcourge the proud and great; with ſuch, I ſwear
Eternal war; not leſs the foe confirm'd
Of all ſuperiors, than the punic chief
Of proud aſpiring Rome, but I muſt hence.—
Yes, model empires; and, in thoughts elate,
Upborne in clouds of fancy'd excellence,
The ſpheres of virtue tread, and think ye roll

In a ſuperior orb; I wield an engine—
That ſoon ſhall lay you proſtrate in the duſt.

SCENE IV.

Enter, to him, KERSAINT *with* SIEYES.

In vain your wily arts; th' almighty will,
That ſacred law, th' almighty people's will,
Decrees the tyrant's doom; and he muſt fall.

Ker. Away, thou miſcreant, can'ſt thou bear the ſight
Of honourable men? dive deep in earth,
Thy proper element; nor ſtand contraſted,
Profaning day, to god and his good works.—
I ſhudder at thee, thou art crimſon'd o'er
With murd'rous hue. The ſmell of blood aſcends;
Aſcends—it fills the boundleſs atmoſphere
With ſuch pollution, that no virtuous thing
May near thee dwell.

Mar. Such cenſure is my praiſe.
Ye ſay, I ſmell of blood; it is my boaſt
That I do ſmell of blood. O might the ſcent
Fill the wide air, and poiſon, on their ſeats,
The deſpots of the earth! Ye ſay, Marat
Is red with butchery;—true—I am red
With blood of tyrants; 'tis my proudeſt boaſt.
O let me wade to freedom, thro' the blood

Of monarchs and their minions, I was born
The ſcourge of royalty, the great apoſtle
Of proud equality. For this, the pavements
Of Paris ſmoak with blood; for this, the Seine
Is choak'd with mangled dead, that, from the ſtream,
The wond'ring natives drive, and, ye, beware—
This abject, vile, deteſted, murd'rous thing
Is maſter of your fates—a day ſhall come.—

[*Exit* Marat.

SCENE V.

KERSAINT *and* SIEYES.

Kerſ. Where is our freedom? where the reign of laws
And conſtitution? while ſuch miſcreants live,
Protected by the rabble, and defy
The ſword of juſtice. Vainly have we cruſh'd
The ſingle tyranny; if we muſt find,
In place of one, a myriad of oppreſſors,
More cruel, as more baſe; if ev'ry lane,
Each ſuburb tavern, and each midnight haunt
Of vice and idleneſs, muſt vomit forth
Its dark divan of deſp'rate democrates,
Lawleſs themſelves, to give their betters law,
And ſanction their decrees, with pike and ſabre.

Sieyes. I do not praiſe the people. I condemn
Their wild exceſſes; and their anarchy.

The ſtate is ſick to death, and 'tis our grievance,
That ev'ry vile empiric would preſcribe.—
Forth from his ſtudy comes the theoriſt,
Fill'd with romances wild of legiſlation:
The mean, the baſe, the lawleſs, and the godleſs,
Are now grown mighty, and aſſume the ſway:
I ſee—I mourn it—but I am not driv'n,
In baſe deſpondence, to forſake the veſſel,
When tempeſts blacken, and the billows riſe,
And ſtrain her lab'ring ſides;—imprinted here,
[*Laying his hand on his breaſt.*
I read the duties, which my country's voice
Enjoins to all her ſons.

Kerſ. Thrice happy Britain!
There, the mild genius of her virtuous ſons
Inſures the temp'rate rule of equal laws,
Juſtice, and decent order; pure alike
From eaſtern ſoftneſs, and from gothic fury,
That fill th' unhappy Frank. Alike, they ſhun
The tyranny of democratic rage,
That levels all diſtinction; and, more hateful,
Tho', ſure, leſs noxious, of deſpotic pow'r
That ſtrikes the palace but the cottage ſpares.
No theoriſts inflame the fickle crowd,
With fine-ſpun ſyſtems, to fanatic orgies,
Philoſophize to madneſs, or produce
A monſter, in the hiſtory of man,
Enthuſiaſt crowds, by metaphyſic themes,

Inflam'd to wilder bigotry, than fill'd
The mad cruſaders, or fanatic bands,
That follow'd Omar, when their arch impoſtor
Pour'd them reſiſtleſs o'er the chriſtian world.

Sieyes. A nation may not paſs, with ſudden ſtride,
To freedom, from oppreſſion; the rich gift,
Like luſcious viands and ſtrong racy wines,
To famiſh'd wretches, fevers breed, and death.
There need ſome preparation and degrees
Of riſing privileges, to confirm
The public habit; that, with conſtant ſtrength,
It may concoct, and thro' each member ſend
Its due proportion of the public freedom,
The precious aliment, that feeds the whole.
The ſons of Britain, by ſlow gradual uſe,
And long ſucceſſion of progreſſive rights,
Were diſciplin'd to freedom, and became
Worthy poſſeſſors of the mighty boon.

Kerſ. The valiant Julius of the Gauls has ſaid,
"They are a race too fiercely volatile,
"For ſolid freedom." Monarchy o'erthrown,
A thouſand ſyſtems of a day ſhall riſe,
Chimeras wild of fancy'd liberty,
And deluge France with blood.

Sieyes. 'Tis true, my friend,
All this I know, and feel; but more I know,
We live not for ourſelves. The parent ſoil
Claims our exiſtence. We are bound to labour

With our beſt efforts, for the public weal,
Succeſsful or unhappy be the event.
But I foretell, that, from this anarchy,
A ſtructure ſhall ariſe, whoſe mighty circuit,
And ſolid ſtrength, and glorious ſymmetry,
Shall human-kind in lateſt times amaze.
Blame not the forms of freedom, rather blame
The baneful influence of oppreſſion paſt,
The mind of man degrading, in the birth,
Stifling the germs and principles of good.

[*Exeunt* Kerſaint *and* Sieyes.

SCENE VI.

Changes to the Street.

Enter ROBESPIERRE, *with a number of pariſian citizens, of the loweſt order, and of the violent party.*

Citizens. All hail, equality! to tyrants death!
Blood, blood, we thirſt, we thirſt; we have emerg'd,
From loweſt depths of human degradation,
That tyranny could ſound.

Rob. 'Tis true, my brethren.
The crown, the nobles, and the hierarchy,
A triple monſter, join'd in fatal union,
Againſt the laws of nature, curſt the land,
With famine, bonds, and death; the bread of life,

The vital air, your toils, your progeny,
All, all, were graſp'd by the ſtrong fangs of pow'r,
And ſqueez'd to diſſolution. The ſmooth courtier,
Within his cabinet, beſet with mirrors
And breathing eſſences, a puny thing,
Shrinking from ev'ry breeze, to gratify
His vanity, his pride, or his caprice,
His luſt of vengeance, or his luſt of gold,
Would chaffer for the fame, the liberty,
The very being of the vet'ran ſoldier,
Hardy and rough, and ſeam'd with glorious ſcars,
That for his country bled. The ſource of juſtice,
Curs'd by the midnight fiend of tyranny,
Call'd from th' infernal pit, became a ſink
Of all pollutions; and th' empoiſon'd vapour
Continual roſe, and thro' the groaning land
Diffus'd infectious plagues.

Citizens. We will be free.
All hail, equality—to tyrants death.—

Rob. Yes, death to tyrants, would ye free remain.—
For vainly, vainly, proſtrate in the duſt,
The form is trampled, while the ſubſtance lives,—
The tyrant breathes, the guilty cauſe of all,
The murderer of his people. Let your ſons,
Your ſires, your brothers, ſlain in freedom's cauſe,
Your butcher'd huſbands, and your mangled children,
Be ever in your ſight; their dying groans,
Their laſt convulſions, call on you for juſtice.
Hark!—hark!—the ſmoak of civic blood aſcends

On freedom's altar. Do ye feel its heat?—
Will it not animate the very ſtones
To riſe, and ſmite the ſceptred criminal?

Citizens. Blood, blood, we thirſt for blood;—the tyrant dies.
All hail, equality, to Capet death!

[*Exit* Robeſpierre *with* Citizens.

ACT II. SCENE I.

The Queen's Apartment in the Temple.

The QUEEN *and* PRINCESS-ELIZABETH, *the* PRINCESS-ROYAL *aſleep on a couch, the* DAUPHIN, *at a diſtance, with a port feuille, drawing.*

Princeſs Elizabeth—looking over the Princeſs-Royal.

STILL ſhe repoſes. 'Tis a bleſſed reſpite
From agonizing thought. The languid frame
Sinks in the arms of ſleep in ſpite of care.—
Well, little-one, how goes thy taſk? Oh fie,
Such ſombrous colouring! What, this a landſcape!

Daup. Black, black is ever next me; and no wonder;
For this abode is gloomy—Thou art ſad,
My mother ſadder ſtill, and my poor ſiſter
Saddeſt of all!—I would that we were free.—
When I ſit down to copy out a landſcape,
The ſtreams and groves, and fields, with ſun-ſhine gay,

It makes me wiſh, that ſtill, as in times paſt,
I might be free to range, and ſkip, and play;
And when a wand'ring bird, as oft befalls,
Againſt the window beats, with careleſs wing,
Methinks I envy him, and would exchange
My hopes of royalty for his free ſtate.

Queen. Thy hopes of royalty!—oh child, child, child!—
Avenging heav'n look down on me and mine.

Daup. But, mother, why is this? Muſt we remain
All the next ſummer in this narrow room?
Nor range the fields, nor chace the butterflies,
Nor cull wild flow'rs, nor ſee the lambkins ſport,
As in times paſt? Oh, when I ſee the ſun,
And think of the green fields; I grow ſo ſick
To range abroad. Why are we thus confin'd?—
I would I were a bird; but 'tis moſt ſtrange,
What can they fear from a poor little child,
Simple, and weak, that they ſhould mew me up
Like an unhappy bird, in this dark cage?
Tell me, how fares my father? Shall I ſee him,
And have his bleſſing? We have long been parted.

Queen. Thy father is condemn'd. Thou haſt no father—
Condemn'd, condemn'd to die, moſt wretched child.

P. Eliz Forbear thy clam'rous grief; thou wilt awake
This ſleeping wretch, that hath a moment ſtol'n
From feeling of her pangs.

Daup. Would I could paint

Like thoſe fine artiſts that adorn the cielings
Of palaces and churches.

P. Eliz. Why, my child?—

Dauph. I would deſcribe our ſtory. Firſt, a king,
Torn from his palace and his friends, confin'd
In a vile priſon; thro' the grated windows,
The ſcanty beams ſhould paſs; his eyes, with weeping,
Should be all red, his viſage pale and wan,
His hair ſhould hang neglected, and his garb
Expreſs th' extreme of ſorrow. I would paint
His woeful ſiſter, and afflicted wife,
His wretched daughter, and his little ſon,
Degraded from a prince, and now become
An hopeleſs beggar child. The portraiture
Should be ſo pity-moving, and ſo true,
That all mankind, ſhould wonder firſt, then weep,
Then join relenting, and redeem my father.

Queen. Redeem thy father! fooliſh child forbear:
Thine artleſs prattle ſtings me to the ſoul.
Oh happy thou, that can'ſt not feel thy ſtate!

Dauph. Sure, Cleri tells me, they have murder'd all
My father's friends and ſervants, good Laporte,
That venerable man, the Jacobins
Have cut his head off; and the valiant Swiſs,
Thoſe brave tall fellows, who have borne me, oft,
In their ſtout arms—all murder'd, and he ſays,
They'll kill my father, too, and you and me.
This, ſure, is ſtrange; for we ne'er injur'd them.

Queen. Why, why does reaſon hold her fatal ſeat?
And mem'ry, why reſide within this brain,
Too, too, tenacious of the happy paſt,
To tear my ſoul, with cruel diligence,
Dwelling on images of parted joy,
Reflecting all augmented, and with ſkill,
Redoubling every horrid circumſtance,
Of miſery around me? Gracious heav'n!
Am I the worſhipp'd queen of mighty France,
Daughter and ſiſter of an emperor?

Daup. But, muſt I loſe my father?

P. Eliz. Wretched child!
Too ſoon, too ſoon, thy words are ominous.

Queen. And nature, too, with fortune, has conſpir'd
More to degrade me. Where is now the light
Of radiant beauty, that around me pour'd
A beaming glory? Fled is all the fire
That fill'd theſe eyes, and gave their glances power,
To win or to command. No more my voice
Around me calls the pleaſures, bids the world
For my amuſement toil, the gay delights,
Exalted joys, and gallant luxury,
Refin'd by genius, that the moments fill'd,
While hours and days, enamour'd of the ſcene,
Forgot their courſe. All vaniſh'd.—Where the crowds,
With prompt obſervance of contentious duty?—

P. Eliz. We want the common forms, that poliſh'd France
Was wont to pay the meaneſt of our ſex;

The common decencies, wont to reſtrain
The brute unletter'd hind, are outrag'd all,
In us and ours.

Queen. I feel thee, hoary age;
Thy ſnows untimely on my head are ſtrew'd.
Grief hath anticipated thine approach,
With tranſport I ſhould hail them, might they prove
The harbingers of freedom.--Sifter haſte—
Look there, look there,—moſt ſtrange and horrible.

P. Eliz. I nothing can diſcern, ſave the dim caſement,
That toward the garden looks;—but moderate
Thy voice—perhaps, our ſurly keepers hear,
And comment on thy ſayings.

Queen. 'Tis amazing—
This ſudden blindneſs: grief hath dimn'd thine eyes,
Or thou would'ſt plainly mark; for there I ſee it.—
Nay, wonder not—'tis there, it onward moves.—
Think it not working fancy or th' effect
Of a diſtemper'd thought. Look there, look there.

P. Eliz. What doſt thou mean? Thy fix'd and hollow eyes
Are turn'd on vacancy.

Queen. Incredulous!
Behold that crimſon arch of bloody drops,
Athwart the chamber ſtretch'd, the gory dew,
Like atomies, ſuſpended hangs in air.
And from that arch's point, a bleeding head
Sails gradual down to me—on either hand
The graceful treſſes flow—on me ſhe ſmiles,

Smiles ev'n in death. 'Tis ſhe, my faithful friend,—
Welcome, ev'n thus; welcome, thou bloody pledge.—
Yes, ye fell blood-hounds, I accept your boon,
This only relique of my mangled friend.

P. Eliz. Now, gracious heav'n, reſtore the light of reaſon,
To her diſtemper'd mind.

Queen. Thou art deceiv'd.
I am not frantic. With my waking eyes,
And ſober mind I ſaw it.—Now, 'tis fled,
The bow diſſolves, and all the chamber floor
Is crimſon'd o'er with blood.—Think me not mad.
I would to heaven I were!—Madneſs would bring
A kind oblivion, of the paſt and preſent,
And joys peculiar to my ſad condition.
I then might think this wretched ſeat a throne,
This dark unhealthy cloiſter a fair palace.
Fancy might free this body from reſtraint,
This mind from cares, and call around me bow'rs,
And ſhades, and fountains. I might crown my brows
With ſtraw, and think I wore a diadem.—
Oh cruel that I am!—My clam'rous grief
Has wak'd my ſuff'ring child. Poor innocence,
I've robb'd thee of a treaſure, and recall'd thee
To ſickneſs and deſpair. But deem not this,
Sole injury, that thy moſt wretched parent
Has to her children wrought.

P. Royal. My deareſt mother
Give me thine hand, and thou, my other parent,

Raiſe me, ſuſtain me, aid my trembling limbs,
To reach the caſement; let me ſee the ſun,
And breathe ſuch air, as this encloſure yields.—
Bleſt ſource of life and light, thro' theſe dim grates,
Thy beams flow temper'd, hail, thou glorious emblem,
Of future entity; in the dark cells,
Of night and ſilence, thou doſt ſink to reſt;
To riſe with light renew'd.

Queen. How fares my child?
Thy hands are damp and chill.

P. Royal. O much reſtor'd.
Fled are the ſecret dread, and inward loathing,
Panting anxiety, and dire oppreſſion.—
Still weak, indeed, and languid, but my weakneſs,
Has ſomewhat of internal luxury,
A moſt delicious feeling paſt the pow'r
Of language to deſcribe.

P. Eliz. Haſt thou not ſlept?

P. Royal. O moſt refreſhing ſleep, ſweet, ſweet and tranquil,—
And then ſuch golden dreams, ſuch ſcenes of bliſs!
I feel the recollection tranquillize
Corroding thought, and thro' my fainting heart,
Diffuſe new life and health.

Queen. What were thy dreams?

P. Royal. Methought, the populace of Paris throng'd,
With joyful viſages, and eager ſhouts,
That rent the ſky; and on their ſhoulders bore,—

Queen. Bore whom, and whither?—

P. Royal. To his coronation,
Methought, they bore my father. Thouſand forms
Surpaſſing human, clad in dazzling robes,
Of light tranſcendent, in their arms receiv'd,
And plac'd him on a throne, with beamy ſtars
Surrounded. At his footſtool, proſtrate fell
The nations of the earth, and paid him homage,
As univerſal king; and, at the word,
The ground with palms was ſhaded, that obtain'd
The growth of ages, in a moment's lapſe;
And roſes bloom'd around, and fill'd the air,
With fragrance moſt divine. My father then,
Caſting his eyes below, amidſt the crowd,
Perceiv'd me, where I ſtood; and with his hand,
Beckon'd me to him; cleaving air, I roſe
Upborne by hands inviſible, and ſate
Beſide him on the throne. Around us then,
Thoſe bright angelic forms diſplay'd their wings,
And drew from golden harps ſuch thrilling ſounds,
As rapt us in delight.

Daup. Alas my ſiſter,
They ſay that viſions their reverſe portend.—
O might our father reign, and thou, and I
Partake his glory, for a glorious thing
It is to reign; a monarch has ſuch pow'r
Of making happy.—Sure, were I a king,
I would not hurt a creature.—I rejoic'd
When the baſtile was levell'd. I would fill
My treaſury with gold and ſilver coin,

And keep the key myſelf, that when I ſaw
A poor afflicted man, or wretched child,
Like the ſad king of France, and me, his ſon,
I might rejoice their hearts.

SCENE II.

Enter, to them, CLERI.

Queen. Oh, faithful Cleri!

Cleri. Hardly indulg'd, I ſnatch a precious moment.
Our keepers' curteſy, to them and me
Were fatal, were it known.

Queen. Thou com'ſt from that curſt meeting.—O, the king—
The king, the king. That horror in thy looks!—
Yet ſpeak —I am prepar'd.—O, thou ſhalt find me
No woman in my tears.

Cleri. I need not ſpeak.——
Oh ſpare me—ſpare me——

Queen. Yes, he is condemn'd.——
He was too mild and good, for theſe vile times.
And what th' event? His valiant guards are ſlain;
His tried adherents butcher'd; he, himſelf,
Shall follow next; and laſt, his wife and children
Muſt expiate with blood their royalty.
Where is Launay? and where the good Laporte?

Where Montmorin ? and where my poor Lamballe ?
That ſoul of pleaſure, that embody'd wit,
That genius more than female. All the graces
Combin'd to deck her form and mind, with charms
For ever varied, and reſiſtleſs ever.
Oh horror, horror ! mangled, butcher'd,—ſavages,
Devouring hell-hounds,—and for me and mine
The victims bled.

Daup. Oh ſave me, ſiſter, ſave me.
Feel how I tremble.

Queen. Vengeance, vengeance, vengeance !
Why ſleep thy thunders, heav'n ? Oh why delay
The myriads of the north ? The vulture's ſloth
Retards the mighty eagle. Diſtant yet
He hovers doubtful, and forbears to ſtrike
The deſtin'd prey ; deſcend, thou bird of war,
Deſcend in whirlwinds ; thunder on thy plumes ;
And, in thy talons, fear and deſolation !
Come, bathe in blood, no common feaſt demands
Thy preſence.—Were I, in the ranks of war,
With trenchant ſabre arm'd, I ſhould forget
The weakneſs of my ſex ; I ſhould forego
The ſoftneſs of my nature ; I ſhould fly
To great revenge.

Cleri. The heav'nly inſtruments
Are now at work. The forge, where great events
Are to perfection wrought, with double heat,
Labours and glows.

Queen. Had he been rul'd by me;
Paris had fall'n, with all her miſcreant brood
Of baſe-born tyrants; his paternal crown
Had ſtill adorn'd his brow; we had been free;
Ev'n now, perhaps, amidſt th' embattled ranks
Paſſing from camp to camp, inſpiring all,
With glorious thirſt of victory and vengeance.

Cleri. Peruſe this note; beſet with eyes and ears,
I may not truſt my tongue with the vaſt ſecret.
Read it not now, but ſeize the friendly ſilence
And gloom of night, and having ſtored the purport,
Within thy boſom, give it to the flames.
My ſtay might wake ſuſpicion. With our tyrants,
Suſpicions wak'd are murd'rous certainties.

SCENE III.

Changes to the King's apartment in the Temple.

LOUIS, *alone.*

Welcome adverſity; thou haſt remov'd
Th' ignoble maſk, or I had paſt thro' life,
In baſe diſguiſe; but with repeated blows,
My ſoul is rous'd; ſhe learns to know herſelf,
Aſſerts her functions, and unfolds her pow'rs,
Deſerts the narrow neſt, expands her plumes,

And claims the vaſt of ether for her own.
The world ſhall ſee me now, by ſuff'rings tried,
In evils patient, in purſuit of good
Firm and tenacious; of my people's blood
Ever moſt frugal, laviſh of my own.

SCENE IV.

Enter, to him, LAMOIGNON.

Approach, my friend Lamoignon—bleſſed fruit
Of this my humble ſtate, I now may find
A friend ſincere; and uſe the ſacred name,
As equals do, without the vain reſtraint
Of ceremonials. I am now, methinks,
A ſimple citizen.

Lam. My royal lord,
With deeper reverence, I behold thee, now,
Immur'd, the ſubject of unmanly ſcorn
And rancorous contumely, bearing all,
In the mild dignity of patient woe,
Than when thou ſat'ſt, enthron'd in ſceptred pomp,
Firſt among earthly kings.

King. O Lamoignon,
I am not void of feeling. At my heart,
I find each motive that can thrill with anguiſh,
A ſovereign and a man. I plainly read

The diſmal ſequel of the ſtorm that ſhook me,
Thus rudely, from a throne: yet, wonder not,
If I profeſs myſelf more truly happy,
Than, in thoſe hours of dazzled royalty,
When I was rais'd a pageant, to the gaze
Of ſhouting multitudes. Oft have I mourn'd
The miſery of kings enſlav'd to pomp
And cumbrous ceremonial of a court;
Ev'n, at the cloſe of every wretched day,
Stol'n from myſelf, from wiſdom, and enjoyment,
By vain parade, and vile unmeaning pomp.
Oft have I wiſh'd, that heaven had plac'd my birth,
Amidſt the middle ranks. I then, had known,
The tranquil joys of ſacred privacy,
The bleſſed ſweetneſs of domeſtic life;
Had mix'd, without reſerve, in converſe free,
And heard the voice of truth from friendſhip's tongue;
My books, my rural ſports had fill'd my hours,
I then had found my talents and my ſtate
Commenſurate, and reach'd the deſtin'd goal,
Nor mourn'd to find that folly or deſign
Mar'd my beſt efforts for the public weal.
Aware of this, and feeling want of means
To remedy the miſchief; ſuch a ſtate
Oft made me ſick of life; and oft I wiſh'd,
Did not the hope, vain hope, that I ſhould prove
An humble inſtrument of gen'ral good,
Make me recall the wiſh, to rid myſelf,

Like other monarchs, that imperial Charles,
And Savoy's ſage, of cumbrous royalty.
But heav'n is good; I am releas'd from all.

Lam. Releas'd, releas'd! my king, my royal maſter.
Oh how ſhall I proceed?

King. Thy face is haggard,
And thy red eyes are ſunk within their orbits,
While their inflated cords too plainly ſhow
The moiſture drain'd by weeping.—Art thou ſick?

Lam. Sire, I am ill at eaſe. I wore the night,
In earneſt ſtudy. To theſe careful lids,
Sleep was a ſtranger, while I told the hours,
In preparation for the ſolemn plea.

King. Thou know'ſt thy toils are vain; not angel tongues
Would on that theme prevail. This head muſt fall;
This blood muſt flow; for that aſpiring ſlave
Of baſeſt paſſions, and of blackeſt aims,
Would ſtride, to ſeize a bloody diadem,
And ſpurn the mangled body of his king,
His kinſman, and his friend.

Lam. Deſpair not wholly.
Our voice may yet awake, within th' aſſembly,
The dormant ſparks of loyalty and reaſon,
Now ſtifled by their fears; th' extorted doom
Has paſt their lips; but, 'tis not, ſure, enroll'd
Within their hearts.

King. No, no, 'tis all in vain.
I can look thro' the tender fallacy.—

Thou haſt been weeping, and thy tears are ſhed,
For thine unhappy friend; thou muſt no more
Thy ſov'reign call him. Could the tongue of man
Avert th' approaching doom; I ſhould, to thee,
My ſafety owe; and ſure he breathes not air,
I would ſo ſoon elect my creditor,
For life and freedom. But deceive me not.
Thou think'ſt, perhaps, I cannot bear the truth,
That I, like others, brave the thoughts of death,
When diſtant view'd, but ſhrink at its approach.

Lam. Without diſguiſe, as, to a royal mind,
Fill'd with true greatneſs, independent all,
Of diadems and ermine, and more great,
To a philoſopher, and greater ſtill,
A pious chriſtian—I reveal the truth—
A truth ſevere; but well I feel and know,
The ſteady temper of a mind reſolv'd
By pow'r divine ſuſtain'd. My lord—my king.

King. It is enough, my friend, be comforted.
I do expect the worſt; to that I hold me.—
How can I pay thy kindneſs, good Lamoignon?
Thy king is poor indeed.—And yet, thy zeal,
That ev'n expoſes life, in ſtanding forth,
Friend of a friendleſs king, it ſhall not want
A glorious recompence.

Lam. How much I envy
The brave and virtuous Romans! They were free
To ſhake aſide the cumbrous load of life,

And march, with fearleſs ſtep and ſoul erect,
To meet eternity. Then friends might join,
And hand in hand purſue that awful journey,
Whence traveller ne'er returns.

King. I welcome death,
As a relief, from this moſt wretched ſtate.
Not for myſelf I mourn, but for my people.
I ſee them now, juſt ſtarting from the goal,
To run their race of anarchy and woe.—
But ſocial intercourſe, ſo late indulg'd,
Betrays my tongue to riot.—I'll not hold thee
Impriſon'd longer.—To thy friendly taſk,
Pleaſing, yet ſad. Affection to thy king
Will recommend the toil, which it muſt mourn.

Lam. With wonder I depart. Sure heav'n ſuſtains
Thy royal ſoul with fortitude divine.

[*Exit* Lamoignon.

SCENE V.

As LAMOIGNON *retires, enter* CLERI.

Cleri. Hope, hope, my royal lord, thou yet may'ſt reign.

King. What mean'ſt thou, Cleri?

Cleri. Still, in France remain,
Some loyal hearts. I may not ſpeak, at large,
What well I know; but, heav'n is buſy now,

To give thee pow'r and freedom, and avenge thee
Of all thy cruel foes.

King. What haſt thou ſaid?
Freedom and pow'r! Beware, beware, I charge thee.
No plots, no maſſacres; for hitherto
My ſoul is clear from blood. "I am a man
"More ſinn'd againſt, than ſinning;" glorious boaſt,
Dearer to me than all the laurell'd fame
Of blood-ſtain'd conquerors.

Cleri. In ſolemn league,
A thouſand gallant ſpirits are combin'd
To ſhed their blood, in thy moſt righteous cauſe.—
They have eluded all the watchful cares,
The dragon eyes, that cloſe not, night, nor day.—
Diſperſt thro' Paris, they but wait the ſignal
That bids them ſtorm theſe walls, and doom to death,
Too long poſtpon'd, the leaders of ſedition.

King. No, by the ſpirits of the murder'd bands
That for my ſafety fell.—No, by the fate
Of all my faithful friends, whoſe gen'rous blood
Yet reeks throughout my palace,—mine no more
It may be ſtiled!—for the capetian line,
No longer ſhall its ſpacious precincts fill,
With majeſty auguſt.—Not, for myſelf,
I mourn. The fierceſt pang, that rends my heart,
Is, that I ſhould be mark'd, an inſtrument,
Of miſerable ruin to my friends;
That in my words and looks, I bear a ſword,

To pierce each faithful heart, that glows with love
For an unhappy king. But I will prove
That this deſtructive nature is, in me,
A fault involuntary. Were I now
Free, and environ'd by a mighty hoſt,
What ſhould I gain?—The dreadful privilege,
Of deſolating that afflicted land,
Which I would die to bleſs. Forbid it, heav'n,
Too many harbingers, by Robeſpierre,
Have been before me ſent, to tell the ſhades,
That Capet is at hand, in this, alas,
Moſt royally attended: more ſhall bleed,
To ſwell my pomp. Such numbers never fill'd
The court of eaſtern kings. O pardon me,
Ye wretched victims of a fatal cauſe,
Your ſuff'rings now are paſt. Ye are at reſt.

[*Scene cloſes.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

An apartment in the Palais Royal,

Enter ORLEANS *and* KERSAINT.

Kerſaint.

I WILL not call thee by the wretched name
That ſpeaks thee of the rabble; mean device,
To catch vile plaudits, by yet viler means.—
No—I will call thee Orleans—let the title
Recall to that ignoble breaſt a ſpark
Of honourable pride;—let it remind thee
Of royal lineage, and the ties of blood
That bind thee to thy king. Thy poor ambition,
With mock humility, would counterfeit
A democratic ſpirit.—O 'tis groſs!—
Awhile thou may'ſt ſucceed; but a few days
Will tear away the maſk; with double rage,
Reſenting paſt deceit, the populace,
Thine idol, now, and engine, will recoil,
And cruſh thee in thine aims.

Orl. Thy looks are harſh,
And harſher ſtill thy words. But, know'ſt thou not
The danger of thy raſhneſs?—ſhould I breathe
The leaſt accuſing word, or ſtamp my foot,
Five hundred ponyards glitter in thine eyes,
Or reek within thine heart.

Kerſ. I fear thee not.—
Look but the tiger ſternly in the face,
He crouches, and is fled, ſmote by the pow'r
Of man's imperial glance. There's in true courage
Something that awes the daſtard. Can it be?—
A prince of ancient Capet's royal ſtem
Renounce his name—forego his honour'd place—
To herd with robbers, baſe-born libellers,
And midnight murderers;—to ſearch the ſtews,
The gaming houſe, and if this vicious city,
Within its ample bounds, includes a ſcene
More baſe and infamous, of guilt and ſhame;
And thence to draw companions, and allies—
To claſp the thief, the beggar, and the knave,
The wretched meddling things, that mount on ſtools
And in the ſtreets declaim!—what—thou a prince?—
For ſhame, for ſhame!—Tho', haply, thou may'ſt think,
To rival the great Florentine, that hid
The ſword of pow'r beneath the civic gown,
Or that aſpiring Greek, whoſe ſubtile art
Deceiv'd the wiſe Athenians; 'twill not be;—
Thou haſt their luſt of power, in that, alone,

Doſt thou reſemble them, but, want their talents,
And want the virtues that adorn'd their crimes.

Orl. What provocation wags thy galling tongue,
With inroad bold on me?

Kerſ. Thy ſhame and guilt.—
Thou haſt aſſum'd a name, that juſtifies
My boldeſt licenſe; ceremonial forms
Suit not the champion of equality.—
I ſee not in thee, now, a peer of France,
I ſee not, now, a prince of royal blood;—
I ſee th' aſſociate of a Robeſpierre,
A buſy Jacobin, a boſom friend
Of a Marat, and every noxious thing
The public tumult ſpawns.

Orl. Say, wouldſt thou ought
Beyond the ſpiteful pleaſure that reproach
Yields the malignant ſoul?

Kerſ. My drift is plain.
The chart I ſteer by is the public weal.
The public weal demands the life of Louis,
Were it, but as a pledge of peace, an hoſtage
For acquieſcence in the multitude,
Devoted to him yet. The monarch's death
Gives the dire ſignal for devouring ſtorms,
Millions will riſe to vindicate his doom,
Whom fear reſtrains, leſt oppoſition, now,
Should haſten what they dread.—'Tis thine to ſave him;
Renounce thy fatal aims, thy black ambition:

Put off the fiend, for once, and be a man,
Or lateſt times will execrate thy name;
Egalite ſhall be a ſound of horror,
A term of reprobation, to denote
Th' incendiary, the villain, and th' aſſaſſin.—
Nay, never gather tempeſts on thy brow;
I am a ſailor, and I fear them not.—
Good heav'n! what times are theſe! when worthy men
But hold exiſtence, at the wild diſcretion
Of an infuriate rabble. Moderation
Is treaſon now againſt the majeſty
And undiſputed reign of anarchy.

Orl. I feel I've gone too far, but room is none
For change or penitence, I am ſo pledg'd.

Kerf. What pledges bind to guilt? What change is late,
From infamy to virtue? We have heard—
And ev'n thy black aſſociates, horror-ſtruck,
Recoil'd as from a monſter—when thy tongue,
A Bourbon's tongue, profan'd the privilege
Of ſacred royalty, and rent the ties
Of fealty and nature, binding thee
To thine unhappy ſovereign. Yet remains
One ſtep of monſtrous guilt; but, ſure, I think,
Sold, as thou art, to crimes, thou haſt not heart
Fiend-like and black, to reach it. Can Marat
Claim ſuch abaſement of thy royal blood?
Or, does th' attendant imp, thy Robeſpierre,

Barter his helliſh ſervices, for acts
That damn thee paſt redemption ?

Orl. Oh forbear ! —
Thy words are ponyards ; ev'ry accent thrills
Within my ſecret heart.

Kerſ. 'Tis better ſpeak
Ideal ponyards, if we thus avert
Material ponyards from the nobleſt hearts,
That beat in France. Forbear, moſt wretched man,
Think not, by fawning blandiſhments, to ſooth
The changeful populace ; they ſcorn'd to bear
Th' imperial ſway of one, adorn'd by juſtice,
Ordain'd and hallow'd by the voice of heav'n,
And ſanction'd, by th' authority of time,
Hereditary rule ; and will they bow
To ſelf-erected tyrants, upſtart kings,
Loaded with crimes, and black with infamy ?—
It may not be—they ſoon will ſpurn to duſt
The fabric of thy greatneſs, and o'erwhelm
The builders in the ruin ; 'tis a fabric
Compos'd of vile materials, and cemented
With blood of guiltleſs men. Oh, ye ſhall find
The gloſs of novelty, that gives you pow'r,
Shall wear away, and to th' aſtoniſh'd eye
Reveal your black deſigns.

Orl. Should I recede,
I loſe th' affections of the populace.

Kerf. Truſt not the people ; 'tis a tiger tam'd ;
You ſtroke him, while he fawns, and fondly think,
He has abjur'd his nature ; at the moment,
He meditates the prey, puts forth his claws,
Collects his limbs, and rounds his ſpotted back,—
Springs forth ; you ſhriek and periſh, and your fall
Shall be unpitied !—for, alas, you knew not,
In the pernicious zenith of your pow'r,
To pity others.

Orl. Something in thy words
Strikes home ; I feel them in my heart of heart.
I ſhall revolve thy ſayings, and recede,
If I with ſafety may.

Kerf. So thrive, or periſh. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

ORLEANS, *ſolus.*

Oh force of truth, how doſt thou ſtrike the ſoul !
Sure, if there be a god, he gives to truth
A portion of himſelf, arms it with pow'r,
To quell the ſinner's mind. Superior force
Inform'd this man ; I fell before him, aw'd.
He ſeem'd ſome agent of the ſacred will,
Some guiding genius. How his accents chang'd
The temper of my ſoul ! I am a villain,

I feel I am. I play a deſperate game,
A baſe and deſperate game;—but how return?—
The ſhip is launch'd from ſhore; my royal blood,
My glorious name, my wealth;—theſe are the freight—
And with what crew?—and what my object?—pow'r,
Precarious, anxious pow'r, by ev'ry crime,
And ev'ry baſeneſs won;—and how retain'd?
By blood on blood retain'd;—for I muſt brave,
Brave and ſubdue ſuch mighty oppoſition.—
Egalite——'tis true——Egalite——
Name of reproach—I ſhall be chronicled,
With tyrants and uſurpers, that have ris'n
To ſcourge the crimes of man.

SCENE III.

Enter, to him, ROBESPIERRE *and* MARAT.

Rob. All is prepar'd;
Zealous and loud, our faithful myrmidons
In ev'ry quarter wait. They call for blood.
Orl. The middle path is ſafeſt, Capet's death
Removes no danger, adds no particle
Of vigour to the cauſe, but heaps a weight
Of odium on our names; deſtroying him,
We loſe a tow'r of ſtrength.

Mar. Egalite,
Thou muſt be ours, or nothing. Next my heart,
I wear this dagger, and my boſom holds
A fount of roman blood, that bids me ſtrike
The friends of tyranny. Ev'n I myſelf,
Could I ſuſpect thine heart contain'd a wiſh
Or lurking notion ſtain'd with royalty,
Would'ſt pierce thy breaſt, and purify the manſion,
From ſuch unworthy tenants.—O remember
We have forgiven thee thy kingly blood,
And rank'd thee, with our democratic bands,
The ſacred champion of equality.—
And would thou now deſert us?—I deteſt
All luke-warm counſels and ambiguous paths,
That ſteer, 'twixt tyranny and common weal;
Neither, and both.—No more—no more of this.

Rob. Haſt thou not urg'd us on? are we not pledg'd,
By draughts of blood thy ſervants? Thou, prime mover,
Haſt ſtain'd our ſouls with murder. Doſt thou, now,
Leave us to mourn thy cowardice, and feel
We toil'd for indeciſion, and obtain'd,
Sole produce of our labours, infamy,
Danger and guilt?—Be ſure, who joins a party
Hath paſs'd the Rubicon, and penitence,
Retreat, reluctance,—ev'n a backward glance
Is treaſon to his allies. Thou haſt won
Our ſecrets from us, ſecrets of ſuch weight,
They may not reſt in alienated minds,

Or doubtful to our cauſe. Deſerting us,
Can'ſt thou reſtore the fatal conſciouſneſs,—
Can'ſt thou eraſe the knowledge of our deeds,
Our ſayings, nay our thoughts?—diveſt thyſelf
Of the dread pow'r, to doom us all to death?—
Thou muſt be ours or nothing—

Orl. Both your hands.—
Then I am wholly yours, by all the blood
Our valiant bands have ſhed.

Mar. The moderate,
So ſelf-denominated, whom our ſpeech,
More juſtly, traitors calls, by force, or fraud,
Aim to delay the deed; ſhould they prevail,
They too muſt fall; the ſtate muſt bleed again,
At every pore; all muſt be ting'd with blood,
And wear our livery, as the only paſſport
That ſaves them from the ponyard.—Riſe once more,
One final inſurrection; for theſe ſhocks
Exhauſt the public frame.—Blood, blood muſt flow,
Flow in large torrents—At the ſelf-ſame hour,
In every province, diſtrict, city, town,
Village or domicile, in ev'ry cottage,
Thro' ſpacious France, let heads of traitors roll,
Gaſping and ſobbing, in th' empurpled duſt;
All hands be plung'd alike in guilt, or juſtice;—
I heed not, by which name the futile world
Denotes the glorious ſacrifice.

Rob. 'Tis right—

Louis muſt periſh. Then no place remains
For penitence or treaties, that might raiſe
The proſtrate wrecks of hated royalty.
Th' aſſembly then are ours; we hold them, penn'd
On a ſmall narrow iſthmus, a deep gulf
On either hand; the populace are ours,
A mighty engine, and no tardy ſchemes
Or views prudential ſuit their fiery temper,
So that the populace retreat yields none
To moderation's ſons; and having fleſh'd them,
With us co-partners and accomplices,
In Capet's death, we cut off ev'ry thought
Of pardon, or alliance with the friends
Of Louis and his blood. Rejected thus,
By democrate and royaliſt they fall
Without redemption.

Mar. Oh how I exult!
On what a glorious giddy eminence
Our flight is pitch'd!—We govern or we fall.
And we will govern. My preſageful heart
Tells me, that we ſhall wield the pow'r of France.
There's nothing ſo extravagant and wild,
That perſeverance may not ſoon accompliſh.
Nay, the more wild, the more extravagant,
The ſurer of completion; for ſuch aims
Flatter th' imagination, and accord
With the wild thoughts and crude-diſtracted minds
Of the groſs multitude. There is a moment,

Take them but glowing hot, inflam'd with rage,
That molds the populace to what we liſt.
Rob. Thou haſt ſaid true. To put thee to the proof,
Haſte to the Cordeliers and Jacobins;
Let all our friends be active in their functions;—
Some to the ſections;—to the commune ſome;—
The reſt poſſeſs the ſtreets, and cry aloud
For Capet's death.—We muſt be bold, and firm
To this one point, a mere majority
Decides the fate of Louis. Be aſſur'd,
Loſing, or gaining this, we fall, or triumph:
I have with diligence, the thoughts explor'd
Of all th' aſſembly, and, with certainty,
Can ſpeak their numbers; ſome for baniſhment,
Others, for death, with reſpite of the ſentence,
Will give their voices. I am well aſſur'd,
We ſhall out-number them, and yet ſo ſmall
Th' exceeding, it will prove a doubtful caſt.
What then remains?—unleſs we may diſpenſe,
In this one inſtance, with eſtabliſh'd forms,
Capet is ſafe; he ſtill remains a check
On all our aims, an object for the faction,
Who hate equality, and look in ſecret
For renovation of deſpotic ſway,
An object of idolatry, a mark,
Round which they rally;—he muſt be remov'd.—
A ſcarcity of bread, or ev'n the fear,
The phantom, of imaginary want,

A check in arms, which, 'mongſt our numerous hoſts,
May well befall, emboldens his adherents.
Then, Louis from a priſon mounts a throne;
We on a ſcaffold expiate our guilt;
For ſo will traitors call our love of freedom.

Mar. This point reſolv'd. I to my miſſion haſte,
Among the Jacobins.—Into their hearts
I'll breathe my ſoul, and wake a flame, that ſuits
The preſent juncture; then, with care, ſelect
The apoſtles of our cauſe, and ſend them forth,
To preach the faith among the federates.

[*Exit* Marat.

SCENE IV.

ORLEANS *and* ROBESPIERRE.

Orl. We muſt remove that man. The frantic zeal
That renders him an uſeful inſtrument,
Our ends obtain'd, would make him dangerous.

Rob. Now, Orleans, be thyſelf. Thou may'ſt be king,
In all the eſſentials of deſpotic ſway,
Wanting the name alone.—protector—tribune—
It ſounds as well—it ſtrikes as ſolid awe,
As king, or emperor—but ev'n the name,
If ſuch a trifle, as an empty name,
Enſnares the manly mind, ev'n that ſhall follow,
On Capet's puniſhment.—Reſolve to be

All this, or nothing; and diveſt thy mind
Of idle ſcruples, ev'ry recollection
Of kindred blood, of oaths of fealty,
Of former friendſhip, and the graceful charms
That deck'd Maria once, and bad her riſe,
The gaze and wonder of the raviſh'd world.

Orl. Maria's charms!—His words have touch'd the ſpring
That works my ſoul to madneſs,—wak'd the viper
That neſtles at my heart!—Revenge, revenge,—
Yes, I am all thine own, poſſeſs my ſoul.

Rob. Seek thine adherents. Soon th' aſſembly meets.
Let them ſurround the doors, poſſeſs the hall,
And cry for Capet's death; the federates
Will claſh their pikes, and join the glorious ſound.

[*Exit* Orleans.

SCENE V.

ROBESPIERRE, *ſolus.*

Fool of ambition, rich in villainy,
But poor in manly daring; adequate
To ev'ry crime, that ſmooths the path to greatneſs;
Devoid of courage, when the path is ſmooth'd,
To march, with manly pace, and graſp the prize.
Yet will I labour, till I place a crown

On his vain head ; for while he ſeems to reign,
My pleaſure ſhall be law, to govern France.
Exalting him, I riſe ; his pow'r, and wealth,
His active zeal, and influence with the crowd
Are needful for a ſeaſon ; by his aid,
And ſpecious ſeemings with the populace,
We hold a power reſulting from opinion,
The child of impoſition, that amazes
Ev'n us, who have obtain'd it ; that, improv'd
By patient arts of gradual uſurpation,
Silent, and ſlow, may ſoon attain an height
Which ſhall diſdain a maſk. While he is mine,
This neceſſary miſcreant, this excreſcence
Of wild ambition, feeds his vain deſire
With royal viſions ; but, revolting from me,
He ſinks o'erwhelm'd beneath the gen'ral odium,
That waits the Bourbon race.—O time and chance,
Ye, that have been my tutelary gods,
And taught with rapid eye, and ſteady hand,
To ſeize the criſis, bear me, on your wings,
To reach th' illuſtrious goal ; for, diſtanc'd now,
I fall, I periſh, trampled by the crowd,
That onward preſs.—I know the populace,
A many-headed beaſt, ſlow to ſuſpicion,
Impetuous in belief ; a ſilken thread,
In a fool's hand, will lead them now ;—anon,
Ev'n chains of adamant and pow'r divine
Will fail to move them. Their ſuſpicions rous'd,

Wakeful, unwearied, they ſoon find, or make,
A dreadful certainty. The death of Louis
Now, in the moment when the public mind,
Hot from remembrance of that bloody day,
Is keen for ſlaughter, well may be atchiev'd,
If Orleans is our own; and that, atchiev'd,
Secures our ſovereignty.

SCENE VI.

Enter, SANTERRE.

Sant. Inactive thus!——
We muſt be prompt, for miſchief is abroad.—
The palais royal, night by night, reſounds
With ſome unuſual ſtir; and oft, by day,
Small groupes we note, that hurry to and fro
With wild and conſcious looks; and, at the temple,
The guards obſervant mark, that certain ſtrangers
Pace round the walls, with ſlow and cautious ſteps,
And meaſure with their eyes the height and breadth,
And ſeem to treaſure each particular,
That might th' aſſailant aid. Truſt me, I fear
Some bold attempt, to free the royal captives.

Rob. A vig'rous blow anticipates ſuch aims.—
Be Capet's ſentence ſudden, and for death;

And let the execution follow up
The ſentence with diſpatch. We fruſtrate thus
The treaſon of his friends. Amaze and awe
Shall quell the braveſt, palſy ev'ry heart;
And that conſpiracy, ſo menacing
While Louis liv'd, becomes a rope of ſand.

Sant. What of the dauphin?—O, that he might ſhare
His father's fate!

Rob. I think not ſo, my friend,
'Twere better he ſhould live; we hold the boy,
An hoſtage for our own ſecurity.
In time to come, he may prove dangerous,
When he has ſtrength to bite, his paws, as yet,
Are velvet and unarm'd; his tuſks unborn.
When he has teeth and fangs, we may remove him,
Pretext will not be wanting for the meaſure.
We bear, already, but too great a load
Of blood and odium; all the pow'rs of Europe
Exclaim againſt us, for the tragedies
That Paris witneſs'd; and the death of Louis
Will aggravate theſe clamours: let us ſhun
Superfluous cruelty.—An infant's blood,
Tender and helpleſs, with his father's mix'd,
Were ſuch a ſpectacle, as would awake
Ev'n ſavage hearts to pity.—But, Santerre,
Say—can'ſt thou anſwer for the multitude?
The gen'ral cry for Capet's death reſounds,
Yet ſome there are, that droop, and hang their heads,

And raiſe their hands to heav'n, in ſilent horror,
As in remonſtrance with the pow'rs above,
That thus they ſhould decree.

Sant. Our federates
Are all prepar'd, and, ſhould the weight of numbers
Preponderate for Louis, in th' aſſembly,
The people, then, aſſert their majeſty,
And purge convention of the lurking traitors,
That, if they dar'd, would juſtify the deeds
Of that arch-traitor Capet. He muſt fall
With his abettors.

Rob. All thy vigilance
Is needful now; for talents, virtues, wealth,
The name of royalty, the prejudice,
Inveterate and ſtrong, that ſheds a glory
Around the diadem, and, ſtronger ſtill,
The mild endurance, 'midſt calamities,
Work forcibly for Louis; ſhould he 'ſcape
A black abyſs, a yawning gulf will ope,
And quick devour us,

Sant. To thy function haſte,
I, to the valiant pike-men, they ſhall crowd
The ſtreets, beſet the temple, and confound
The hopes of bold conſpiracy, that aims
To ſnatch our victim from the ſword of juſtice.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

The ſtreet at the Palais Royal.

PARIS, *ſolus.*

SHADE of our ſainted Louis, from thy ſeat,
In bliſs above, behold thy progeny,
The beſt of human kind beſet with hell-hounds,
Athirſt for ſacred blood —O happy Paris,
Heav'n hath ſelected thee, and rais'd thy ſoul
With energy divine, to meet and fill
Th' ennobling functions of thy mighty miſſion.—
Oh, happy right-hand, thou ſhalt yet be red,
With glorious crimſon, with the blood of traitors!
Orleans ſhall bleed, that moſt deteſted traitor;
That double traitor—to his royal blood
And to his king; and Robeſpierre ſhall bleed,
That duſt-engender'd ſerpent;—he hath ris'n
On wings unwonted, to pollute the air
With peſtilential blaſt;—Marat ſhall bleed:—
I claim the miſcreants; they are my poſſeſſion,
By heav'n aſſign'd, their blood is all my own.

SCENE II.

Enter, CLERI.

What bring'ſt thou, Cleri? Doth our ſainted lord
Approve the labours of our loyalty?

Cleri. It may not be, for, with a martyr's firmneſs,
He is prepar'd for death. He ne'er aſſum'd
So ſtern a tone before. With mind reſolv'd,
He reprobates all ſchemes, that lead to war
And carnage of his people.—Mark his words—
" If, yet, there may be found whoſe loyal hearts
" Revere their king tho' reft of earthly good,
" And earthly hope, o pay the ſole obedience
" Your ſov'reign now requires! I do conjure you,
" By all the comfort my reflections yield,
" To ſooth captivity; by that repoſe
" My parting days require; by all my hopes
" Of bright ſerenity, in that dark hour
" That frees th' immortal part, from mortal coil;
" And, laſtly, as ye hope to ſee my name
" And mem'ry to ſucceeding times deſcend,
" Free from reproach,—forbear your ſchemes of blood.
" That leave your king the mark of calumny,
" And draw down on yourſelves moſt ſure deſtruction."

Paris. Think'ſt thou to ſhake our rooted loyalty,
By danger to ourſelves, poor worthleſs things!
Made for our maſter, only valuable,
When ſomething we contribute to his pleaſure,
His ſervice, or his ſafety:—too, too happy,
Were we elected, by the pow'rs above,
To periſh in his cauſe!—What from the queen?

Cleri. The weight of ſorrows and the ſad reverſe,
Beyond example, of her preſent ſtate,
Have now o'erwhelm'd that active ſoaring mind,
And ſo relax'd its tone, ſhe flies from thought,
Nor dares to cheriſh hope. Yet well I know,
Could'ſt thou avenge her wrongs, without deſtruction
Of thee and thine, it were a ſervice grateful
To ev'ry ruling pow'r of earth and heav'n.

Paris. Enough, o Cleri, thou haſt fir'd my blood.—
Three days mature our hopes, and break the bonds,
That hold the royal captives; then, our king,
Array'd in terror, not in patient ſuff'rance,
Shall join the auſtrian hoſts, and lead them on,
To cruſh his rebel foes.—Ye pow'rs of heav'n,
Strengthen theſe arms, to reach the hearts of traitors;
And when I ſee my ſov'reign and his race
Reſtor'd to freedom, and endued with pow'r,
To claim their ancient rights, then, let me fall
A glorious martyr to the bleſſed cauſe!—
This very hour, within the walls of Paris,
Are thrice five hundred gallant veterans,

All unſuſpected; for, by various paths,
And in ſmall groupes, they've ſought this capital,
At various ſeaſons; and for weary weeks
Their numbers have been joining;—night by night,
Ev'n in the palais royal, 'midſt the minions,
Of black Egalite! moſt free and ſafe
From all ſuſpicion, when the neareſt danger,
They hold their meetings; all are pledged and ſworn
To periſh, or reſtore to liberty
Their captive king. Thou, to the queen, reveal
What providence deſigns; the king remains
Unconſcious of our labours for his good.

SCENE III.

Enter, GASTON, *with other loyaliſts, diſguiſed as national guards.*

My ſoul, my ſoul be firm, collect thy force,
Accompliſh the great work, redeem thy king,
Or fall an happy victim. Welcome, friends,—
Say, ſay, how ſpeeds our cauſe?—Have ye been buſy'd,
As zeal ſhould prompt?—How goes our preparation?—
What of the cuiraſſiers?—And has La Mark
Survey'd the temple works?

Gaſton. Ev'n to our wiſh ;—
La Mark has noted down whate'er may ſerve
Our future purpoſe ; and the Cuiraſſiers,
Diſguis'd like federates, mix with the crowd,
Unknown and unſuſpected.

Paris. Has thy care
Prepar'd for Orleans ?—How I long to greet him,
With my good ſabre, on the creſt, and cry—
Thou ruffian prince, thou ſhame of royal blood,
Receive thy monarch's thanks !——

Gaſton Our truſty bands
Surround his palace : and, even now, we hold
The ſavage in our toils.

Paris. Oh thanks to heav'n !
Now, vengeance, vengeance, vengeance on rebellion !
Now ſmile, ye great deliv'rers of the land,
Champions of juſtice. Hark—your country's voice
Calls to th' immortal deed, the high purgation,
With holy ſteel, and ſacramental fire !

Gaſton. The melancholy form of ravag'd France,
In ſable ſtole array'd, and ſtain'd with blood,
Riſes in weeping majeſty ;—ſhe ſtands,
Hourly, before me ;—to my hand ſhe gives
The ſword of juſtice, and, in ſounds that thrill
The ſecret ſoul, ſhe cries—" Behold, behold !—
" Art thou my ſon ?—Is thine heart truly french ?
" Thy king—thy king in chains ;—his beauteous conſort,
" Delight of ev'ry eye,—his royal progeny—

" Oh feel, feel, feel!"—I do, I ſwear by heav'n—
I view—I feel—I have both eyes and heart—
My hand ſhall follow.—Yes—a deed ſhall be——
Paris. There ſpake a ſon of France.—My friend, embrace me;
Yes, look around and weep; where'er we turn,
Are ſubjects for our tears; but, let thoſe tears
Inflame, not melt our courage to deſpondence;
The proſtrate ſtate preſents a ſpectacle
Of outrage wild, and multiplied miſrule;
She lies, a giant corſe, o'erthrown and butcher'd,
By her rebellious children; reft of ſenſe,
She welters in her gore; in ev'ry quarter,
The dreadful echos of her mighty fall
Are heard abroad; they ſhake the ſolid earth;
From rocks and dens, from water, earth, and air,
They call each noxious, vile, and hideous thing,
That lives by prey, to ſhare th' abundant feaſt—
From air, deſcends the felon kite, the crow,
The pie, the daw, the raven ominous,
And ev'n the moping owl, by ſcent of carnage,
Is tempted into day:—all flap their wings,
And rend her bleeding vitals. From the hills
And mountain caves, pour forth the ſcowling tenants,
The ſlaviſh jackall, and the wily fox,
And the gaunt wolf, with ſlaughter never cloy'd,
And, more obſcene, the minor plunderers,
That loathing light, abide within the earth,
In privacy abhor'd,—ev'n they aſſume

Unwonted boldneſs, brave the ſight of man,
And, ſtill more awful, the broad eye of day.
The hydrus, lizard, and the crocodile
Their river-haunts forſake, o'erſpread the land,
And feel their chilly hearts ſtrange warmth imbibe,
With draughts of human gore.

Gaſton. A time may come—
Our warlike hoſts will ſpurn their upſtart kings,
And feel the worth of ancient royalty.
With thunder on his plumes, and martial clang,
The mighty eagle from the clouds ſhall ſweep,
With pounce reſiſtleſs; at his dread approach,
Fled are th' inferior ſpoilers.—From his den,
The lion rouſes; with commanding roar,
He ſhakes the diſtant woods; the foreſt trees,
Like ruſhes, bend beneath him, forth he bounds,
He ſeizes on the prey, the feeble bands
Of ſubject ſpoilers ſink beneath his fangs.

Paris. Dumourier holds the balance of our fates,
The darling of the troops, the ruling mind,
That warms the public cauſe.—In field and council
Ever unwearied, ever full of hope,
Calm and undaunted, atlantean mind,
He bears againſt the ſtorm, repels the waves
Of the mad populace, the guſt of malice
And ſhafts of calumny.—His ken profound
Can fathom men and motives, and his art,
With pliant ſkill, around the ſpirit winds,

And ſhapes it to his purpoſe. Dumourier
Is ours in ſecret: hence, he ſpar'd the foe
And bade th' enthuſiaſt ſoldier, in his ſpeed,
And full career of glorious victory,
Forbear the bands, with plague and famine thin'd.—
Th' exterminating angel hover'd o'er them,
In clouds of putrid vapour; in his hand,
A flaming ſword;—he ſhow'd the barren plains,
And cry'd—"behold your graves."

Gaſton. Soon, ſhall the flames
All parts of France emblaze. The hardy Bretons
Shall ſoon the ſtandard raiſe, for loyalty;
Devoted to their king, they meddle not
With abſtract queſtions; leagued with engliſh ſuccours,
Their arms ſhall ſpread, and reach this neſt of traitors.

Paris. Th' expanding cloud, that blacken'd in the north,
In denſe array moves on, it congregates
The tributary horrors, and convenes,
From ev'ry quarter of the low'ring ſky,
Th' embattled elements, Sardinia, Spain,
Th' imperial eagle, Pruſſia nurſt in fight,
And Germany awakes, thro' all her circles,
Her ſlow obdurate children; laſt, and chief,
Batavia bids the britiſh lion rouſe,
Recall the triumphs of his ſtreaming croſs,
And vex the deep again. The land and ſeas
Shall groan with armaments, and earth be fat,
And water red, with blood of human kind.

Gaſton. In Lyons, we have many.—Scarcity—
Part real,—aggravated part, ſhall yield
The firſt pretence, and give the ſignal cry,
For inſurrection.—Here, our converſe ends,
For enemies approach. Farewell 'till midnight.

[*Exeunt ſeverally.*

SCENE III.

As they quit the ſcene, enter KERSAINT *with* SIEYES.

Sieyes. 'Tis not a time to ponder what were beſt;
If men were free to chuſe, we muſt ſelect,
Amidſt a choice of ills, and call it wiſdom;
Such various motives and diſcordant aims
Divide th' aſſembly, where the jarring atoms
And embryon elements of action mix.—
Ev'n virtuous, wiſe, and patriotic minds
Moſt ſtrangely differ, as the diff'rent force
Of birth, profeſſion, education, ſtudies,
Habits of life, purſuits, and temper lead.—
It much imports the honeſt few to guard
Each avenue, that, to the public mind,
An acceſs yield; leſt knaves and fools obtain
Supreme and fatal ſway. That Robeſpierre,
And wild Marat, a ſanguinary maniac,

Have wak'd a thirſt of blood, I ſee, and mourn it,
That cannot be ſubdued ; it muſt be quench'd.
Kerſ. And why is this, that nature teems with ill?—
Why tow'rs the poiſon plant infecting air?
Why form the hooded ſnake, the crocodile,
The tyger, the hyena, and Marat?—
Marat—an aggregate of every crime,
A ſummary of noxious properties,
Horror and guilt, with brand indelible,
Have mark'd him for their own, with glance oblique,
Scowl in his downcaſt eye, and add a gloom
To his dark viſage ; the tumultuous workings
Of his volcanic mind, thro' face and limbs,
Diſtorted hideouſly, convulſions ſpread,—
Yet, thus diſtorted, cannot they expreſs
The ſtrange obliquities, the wild diſtortions,
Of monſter-breeding fancy. 'Tis moſt ſtrange,
This miniature of horror ſhould poſſeſs
The gen'ral confidence, when nature's tongue,
In ev'ry feature, and in ev'ry limb,
So plainly cries—"beware."
Sieyes. The voice of reaſon
Again ſhall reach our hearts. We, then, ſhall mourn
Our wild exceſſes, and, with hatred, view
The fatal inſtruments, that urg'd us on
To drown the civic wreath in royal blood.
I can predict the downfall of theſe men
Whoſe word is now a law, whoſe frown is death.

Virtue, mean-time, nor ſhrinks, nor quits the bark,
As of the ſtate deſpairing ; 'tis her boaſt,
And nobleſt pride, to combat difficulties,
Wreſtle with danger, and deſpiſe the praiſe
That living tongues may laviſh. We are call'd,
To double efforts ; and, the leſs our hope,
The more our duty, with our beſt exertions,
To labour for the ſtate ; the more our praiſe ;
Succeeding in thoſe efforts, and the more,
Thoſe efforts failing, is the conſolation
That ſhall endear our fall, if heav'n ſhould doom us
To ſeal, with blood, our civic piety.

Kerſ. The ſtate is too unwieldy, and too vaſt,
For democratic ſway ; the huge machine
Demands a ſingle head. The luxury
Of crowded Paris, and the capitals
That vie with Paris, in our provinces,
Hath indiſpos'd us, for the ſober forms
And ſelf-denials of a common-weal,
That needs a grave and hallow'd character,
Where patriot wiſdom, on the ſolid baſe
Of private virtues, builds, with happy hand,
The glorious ſtructure of the public good.—
And what are we, that emulate the Romans ?—
A ſkipping, dancing, diſſipated crew,
With burſts of wild ferocious levity.

Sieyes. Thy cenſure is unjuſt ;—our nation boaſts
Th' exalted aims and comprehenſive views

Of mild philoſophy, with lib'ral arms,
Embracing all mankind—the ſtateſman's ſkill
In council, and in treaty—ſcience led,
From the ſequeſter'd lamp and barren toils,
To wed with commerce in productive union,
And great inventions, both for peace and war,
Are their glad progeny. Among the crowd,
If luxury prevail and levity,
Blame a corrupted court, from age to age,
With baſe examples of unbluſhing vice,
And wild extravagance exhauſting art,
Tainting the public eyes, and public mind,
With groſs pollutions, canſt thou wonder then,
If yet ſome ſtains are found, the foes of freedom,
With triumph, mark them, and on freedom charge
What want of freedom caus'd.

Kerſ. Aſſert thyſelf.—
Profound reſearch and a commanding ſoul
Are thine; and wilt thou ſtoop to practice arts
That dignify ſuch things as Robeſpierre?—
Reſiſt, with firmneſs, the vile populace;
Oppoſe thy boſom to the roaring torrent.—
Were glorious talents, philoſophic views,
And mild humanity ordain'd to follow
The guidance of the rabble?

Sieyes. Yet, my friend,
That guiding rabble is conjoin'd, by fate,
With freedom's cauſe.

Kerf. Then, deſp'rate is that cauſe,
If ſuch ſupport it needs,—a worthleſs rabble,
The miniſters of luxury, the ſpawn
Of diſſipation join'd with ſudden famine!

Sieyes. We may not, all at once, the habits form
That flow from ſteady freedom. It will need
Experience, time, and, chief, calamity,
That ſtern but uſeful teacher, to reſtrain
The wild exub'rance and impatient warmth
Of public mind, intoxicated, now,
With copious draughts of power; but, we ſhall ſee,
A britiſh ſpirit fill the gallic breaſt.
As yet, their liberty, like ſumptuous garments
Giv'n to ſome mendicant, reſtrains and galls
Th' unpractis'd wearer.

Kerf. True, the paſt oppreſſion
Diſfigur'd and embruted human kind;
Proſcribing free reſearch, and lib'ral thought,
And virtuous motive, binding up the tongue,
In abject terror; that the feaſt of reaſon,
And holy interchange of mind with mind,
Were here unknown; and frivolous delights,
The dice, the dance, and vague licentious love,
Were call'd in aid, to baniſh riſing thought,
That told men they were ſlaves; and idle noiſe
And mirth diſſembled drown'd the hated cry
Of jealous deſpotiſm, reſounding ever,
In tones ſevere and hollow, to the fears,

Freezing the heart's warm currents, as they flow'd.—
But why ſhould Louis expiate the crimes
Of tyrants that preceded?—We are witneſs,
He meekly bore his faculties, and lean'd
To wholeſome counſels, zealous, to concur
In ev'ry project, for the public weal.

Sieyes. I know it—but the common herd retain
A ſavage mem'ry of the paſt oppreſſions;—
Hence their exceſſes, hence the mournful waſte
Of noble blood.—Ye rulers of mankind,
O never drive the people to deſpair,
Feed them with hope, and they will much endure;
Still teach them to look upward to their king,
For cure of evils; let them not be taught
To right themſelves, and know their dangerous ſtrength,
A fatal ſecret for the governor,
And for the crowd themſelves; for, that once known,
Firſt, they remove their wrongs and grievances,
They next ſecure their rights, but this perform'd,
Good, in itſelf, injurious in the means,
They reſt not here content, but, fluſh'd with conqueſt,
From bond-ſlaves, they commence inſulting tyrants,
And uſe their pow'r, with inſolence, proportion'd
To their paſt abject ſtate.

Kerſ. The death of Louis
Would blot the gallic fame to lateſt times.—
May we not hope, by timely oppoſition,
To ſtem the people's rage. Will they not feel

His peaceful virtues? will they not recall
His large conceſſions to the public voice?

Sieyes. Marat prevails, and all attempts are vain
To ſave his deſtin'd life; ruin to us,
Perdition to our country, waits th' attempt.
The crowd demand a victim; we ſhall periſh,
After a vain attempt to ſtem the torrent,
With him we would preſerve. We muſt retain
The public confidence, our only hope
In this conjuncture, better yield, awhile,
To wind and tide, and deviate from the courſe
That brings the veſſel to her deſtin'd port,
Than by impatience drive her on the rocks,
Where certain ſhipwreck waits her; better join
The people, ev'n in wrong, that we may turn them,
From wrongs yet greater, and their own perdition,
Than by deſertion, in the fatal hour,
Hazard the loſs of all. To guide the people,
We muſt not only ſeem to follow them,
But yield, in part, to do ſo. Confidence
Is by complacence won, and confidence,
Confirm'd by uſe, becomes authority.

Kerſ. Miſtaken hope, to rule the populace,
By yielding to their rage! This fatal act
Will ſcatter wide the ſeeds of civil war.—
And ſhall this land, the ſeat of poliſh'd arts,
And mild philoſophy, and ſocial joys,
Become the reſidence of brutal rage,

Devouring anarchy, and deadly carnage ?—
Shall the wide havock of devouring war,
Deform the ſcenes of peace and elegance ?

Sieyes. Deſpond not thus ;—our civic bands, ſublim'd
By bright enthuſiaſtic fire, will brave
Danger, and want, and raging elements,
With daring more than human. Thou ſhalt ſee them,
Like lions, ruſh to thin Pannonia's ranks.

Kerſ. Surrounded, as we are, by puiſſant foes,
We need the rule of one ; the times demand
A ſummary and vig'rous promptitude,
A brief and dextrous ſecrecy, in council,
A calm and rapid concert in the field ;
Such, as we may not hope, from loud debate,
Manag'd by theoriſts and demagogues,
In mix'd tumultuous meetings.

Sieyes. We muſt own—
If ancient maxims are receiv'd, on truſt ;—
That wide extended ſtates, by monarchy,
Are beſt adminiſter'd ;—but future times
Shall ſee th' example of our common-weal
Refute the prejudice, and give an inſtance
Of vigour, ſecrecy, and promptitude,
Surpaſſing all belief.

Kerſ. I would preſerve
The kingly pow'r, as true ſupport of freedom.—
Calm, ſober freedom, not licentious rage,
Verging to tyranny, in the worſt form.

Our maker tells us, that ſupremacy
Should be concenter'd in a narrow ſpace,
And rais'd aloft conſpicuous ;—thus, we ſee
The ruling head ſurmounts the graceful fabric
Of man, divinely form'd, within itſelf,
Compriſing ſenſe and life ; imperial ſource
Of thought, volition, reaſon, fantaſy;
Sovereign to ſway, and provident to guide,
Each vital function, with unqueſtion'd pow'r
And kingly promptitude, it ſends abroad
Its mighty mandates thro' th' obedient limbs.

Sieyes. If thou would'ſt argue from the works of nature,
They ſpeak more ſtrongly for a common-weal.—
Nature's great author, in his works, hath taught us
That elements ſhould mix, and adverſe pow'rs
Temper each other ; in all kinds that breathe
And live, and ev'n in things unorganiz'd
And lifeleſs, various elements combine,
Earth, water, air, and fire, to form a maſs ;
Nay, elements themſelves, that ſimple ſeem,
Are all compounded, and within them hold
Diſcordant principles ;—thus, earth combines
Air, water, fire ;—and water, earth and air.—
Thus, air, a gen'ral thief, collects, from all things,
Diſcordant particles, and blends them all,
In one fair tiſſue of tranſparent blue ;
And, from the plunder of creation, forms
Her curtains thin, around this earthly ball.

[*Scene cloſes.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

The ſtreet near the Palais Royal.—Time, before day-break.

PARIS, GASTON, *and other Conſpirators, who are ſuppoſed to have juſt learned the decree for the King's immediate execution.*

Paris.

HORROR and ſacrilege!—our king, our father,
Dragg'd thro' the public ſtreets a criminal,
A pageant of diſhonour to the crowd!—
The hooting rabble!—and to cloſe his days,
His ſad career of life and royalty,
Like a baſe malefactor, on the ſcaffold.

Gaſton. Ariſe in vengeance, heav'n, if kings on earth,
Are god's vicegerents; riſe, in majeſty
Severe, to blaſt our foes!—let anarchy
Pervade the ſtate, let diſcord fill their councils,
Famine their ſtreets, and terror, and diſmay
Their rebel armaments.

Paris. Forbear, forbear!
Thy curſes kill not, Louis claims thy ſword.—
Ours is an heav'nly cauſe, the man that falls
A bleſſed martyr dies.—My friends remember
For what we fight;—the blood of ſainted Louis,
The blood of our great Henry—ſacred laws
And hallow'd orders fix'd by god himſelf
Ere eldeſt time began—the majeſty
Of Gallia's crown—the fame of loyalty,
The boaſt of Frenchmen—the majeſtic charms
That deck our ſuff'ring queen,—the piety,
The mild humanity, and patriot aims
That ſhould endear our king—the innocence
And early promiſe of exalted virtues
That grace our lovely prince;—the ſufferings, laſt,
Of his mild ſiſter, like a beauteous flow'r
Declining on the ſtalk,—let theſe ſpeak home,
And inward, to the man, within the ſoul;
And rouſe the ſpirit to atchieve an act
That ſhall eclipſe all proud antiquity,
Exulting in her heroes.—Haſte, my friends,
Each to his ſev'ral charge, the hour is come.

Gaſton. Paris, thou haſt ſaid well—more words are vain.—
Each to his ſev'ral poſt.—Averne, proceed—
Beſet the Thuilleries;—and thou, Lamont,
With thine allotted numbers wait the ſignal;—
Then cry—"o pardon—pardon to our king!"

Be theſe our watch words;—they will be re-echoed
From ev'ry quarter.

Paris. Then, while conſcious guilt
And torpid wonder freeze the faculties,
And hold ſuſpended that aſſaſſin band,
With timely ſudden boldneſs, onward ruſh,
And ſeize the cannon, turn them on the foe,
And Louis reigns again. Thou, Ablancourt,
With thine aſſociates to the palais royal,
To cruſh the hydra head, that rears its creſt
'Gainſt virtue, ties of blood, allegiance, oaths,
And heav'n itſelf—haſte, haſte—theſe hours are rich,
In great occaſions of immortal fame.

[*Exeunt ſeverally.*

SCENE II.

Enter SANTERRE, ROBESPIERRE, *and* MARAT.

Marat. Amidſt our triumph, let us not relax
Our wiſe precautions for the public ſafety.
The times demand unwonted vigilance.
'Tis more than rumour'd that a deſp'rate band,
By Paris led, are now within our walls.

Rob. It much behoves the friends of liberty,
With anxious zeal to watch the populace,

Ever afloat on ſhifting vague opinions,
Ever athirſt for change and novelty.
To keep them firm, we muſt reſtrain the voice
Of forward diſaffection, which would work
On the groſs feelings of the multitude.

Sant. I have provided for th' emergency.
From ev'ry ſection, ſhall a truſty cohort
In arms aſſemble, five times five, from each,
Of known integrity; to form a guard,
Leſt any friend of proſtrate royalty,
Urg'd by deſpair, ſhould form a laſt attempt
To ſtay the courſe of juſtice. From the legions,
Shall bands ſelected line the ſtreets, and cloſe
Each avenue, that, to th' appointed ſcene
Of awful juſtice leads. In ev'ry ſection
Shall a ſtrong phalanx wait prepar'd in arms.

Marat. O well prepar'd. Come on, thou glorious day,
Mark'd in the faſti of revolving time,
The ſignal feaſt of juſtice. Riſe, o ſun,
Call forth the tyrant, uſher in the pomp,
The triumph of our freedom;—feaſt theſe eyes,
With Capet's lifeleſs trunk and ſtreaming gore.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The Queen's apartment in the Temple.

The QUEEN, PRINCESS-ROYAL, MADAM ELIZABETH *and the* DAUPHIN.

Queen. How obſtinate is life in miſery!
How ſtrong to ſuffer, and how ſlow to periſh,
This ſeeming feeble frame! oh death, oh death,
Why mock me thus, for ever in my ſight,
Yet ever-more delay'd?—oh life, life, life,
Intolerable burthen! life no more,
But an oppreſſive intermediate ſtate,
'Twixt entity and nothing, a dire ſlumber,
Fill'd all with horrid viſions that ſucceed
Dread uniformity of varied woe.
But Cleri bids me hope. In terms obſcure
The ſcroll was worded—but 'twas full of hope.—
What hope!—What hope?—Can Cleri too be chang'd,
Like the falſe world?—Would he inſult my woe,
And raiſe my ſoul, with flatt'ring images,
To ſink me deeper, by the ſad reverſe,
In ſorrow and deſpair.

Daup. O tell me, mother,
Where is my father now?

Queen. Unhappy child!
Too near, and yet too diſtant.

Daup. How is that.—
Diſtant and near?—but 'tis no matter;—ſay
When ſhall I ſee him? 'Tis a weary age
Since I have ſeen him. Sure, theſe Jacobins
Are cruel people. Have they little children?
Oh, if they had!—but they will kill my father,
And you, and me, and drink our ſtreaming blood;
For Cleri tells me, they are cannibals,
And feed on human fleſh.

Queen. Oh, that were mercy—
To drink our blood, and banquet on our fleſh—
They will not grant it, ſavage and inhuman,
Beyond the practice of the fierceſt hordes,
And wildeſt ſavages that ſhow our nature
In deepeſt degradation.

Daup. I had hopes
My father was releas'd.

Queen. And wherefore child?

Daup. I could not ſleep all night, I heard ſuch noiſe
Of ſhouts and diſtant mirth. O how I long'd
To join the crowd and ſhout. Some joyful tidings
Are near at hand, and I ſhall ſee my father.

Queen. They ſhouted—for what cauſe?—Thou little wretch,
Some demon has inform'd thy luckleſs tongue,

It teems with barbed words.

Daup. Have I ſaid harm?

Queen. Peace, peace, for Cleri comes; unwonted joy
Looks thro' his eyes. What comfort doſt thou bring?

SCENE IV.

Enter CLERI.

Thy billet darkly hinted mighty things;—
Say—ſhall they riſe in act?

Cleri. Yes, heav'n repairs
Th' unkindneſs paſt, and Louis ſhall be free.

Queen. Freedom!—a crown—to join the auſtrian camp—
What—vengeance on our foes—

Cleri. A loyal band
Of hardy veterans wait the glorious moment,
By Paris led, to give their ſov'reign freedom.

Queen. What Paris—faithful Paris—how he wept,
When to his arms I gave this kingly child,
On the ſad morn that call'd our gallant train,
To fruitleſs efforts and a glorious death.

Daup. Shall Paris come again? I can remember,
His whiſkers hurt my cheek; I could have cry'd,
The pain was ſuch, but thought it was not princely—
But I'll forgive him, if he ſaves my father.

Queen. Peace, liſt'ner, peace ;—'tis not for thee to know—
Reſtrain that babbling tongue—our foes may hear.

SCENE V.

Changes to the King's Apartment in the Temple.

LOUIS, *ſolus.*

Father of mercies, hope of ſinful man—
This awful ſeaſon ſaw thee take our form,
And yield thyſelf, obedient, to the ſhames,
Infirmities, and ſorrows, that beſiege
Our earthly pilgrimage. Author of good,
Receive me to thyſelf. I haſte to prove,
Imperfect as I am, the bleſſed fruits
Of thy myſterious birth and wond'rous death.—
Thou know'ſt I ſought not tyranny, I mourn'd
The baneful influence of deſpotic pow'r,
That brooded o'er the land—I ſaw, with pride,
The growth of reaſon in the gen'ral mind,
I gladly yielded to the firſt emotions
Of naſcent liberty, and reign'd, in thought,
The king of happy people.—Sad reverſe!
Nature deſign'd me for a time of peace,
And calm obedience, then, I had been bleſt,

And made my people bleſt—but, wanting force
Of ſtern ſeverity or ſubtle craft
To cruſh or to deceive, I fall a victim.—
But all is paſt.—How poor are crowns and thrones!
Compar'd with that eternal crown, that ſeat
Among the bleſt above! The pious Edgeworth,
Has fill'd my ſoul with ſacred energy—
I ſee the bliſsful manſions ope—I riſe,
With firm alacrity, to take the cup
An heav'nly hand extends:—the moment comes.—

SCENE VI.

Enter PETION *and* SANTERRE, *with other deputies appointed to communicate notice to the King of his approaching execution.*

Petion. Offspring of Capet, with reluctant pace,
And bleeding hearts, do we perform the taſk;
The ſtate enjoins. Thou know'ſt why we are here.

King. I know it well, and long have ſchool'd my mind,
To welcome your approach.

Petion. O pardon us,
The hard neceſſity of theſe dread times
Impos'd the fatal duty.

King. I believe it,
And thank thee for the tender ſympathy,

That feels for my misfortunes, and removes
Outrage and inſult from this fatal moment.

Petion. Receive our reverence, and our pious tears,
All we, alas, can give. More we would ſay;
But our ſtern function, and the ſolemn duty
We owe our country, interdicts our voice.

King. May I not ſee my children and my wife,
Long ſtrangers to my ſight?—I know the terror,
That ſuch a meeting brings.—What agonies
Shall rend my heart,—yet cannot I refuſe
This cruel pleaſure to my parting hour.

Petion. Thou ſhalt behold—

King. And ſpeak to them? and fold them,
In theſe fond arms?

Petion. Yes, thou ſhalt freely ſpeak,
And claſp them to thy breaſt, without reſtraint
Of witneſſes.—The ruling council mourns
Th' inevitable doom.—All that may ſooth
The poignancy of death—they freely grant.
We ſhall retire—the guards will entrance yield,
Frank and unqueſtion'd,—to the much lov'd pledges,
That ſoon muſt be reſign'd;—may heav'n ſuſtain,
And arm thy ſoul, with ſainted conſtancy.

[*Exeunt Deputies.*

SCENE VII.

The King, ſolus.

A dreadful privilege. I then ſhall ſee them—
Claſp them a moment—and for ever part.
My ſoul recoils; would I were now to die—
Nor meet this dreadful trial—it muſt be—
My ſuff'ring wife—my child—my innocent!

SCENE VIII.

Enter the QUEEN, PRINCESS ELIZABETH, PRINCESS ROYAL, *and* DAUPHIN.

Queen. My lord—my huſband!—and, yet dearer name,
My king—the king of France—long, long a ſtranger
To theſe dear pledges, fold them to thy heart—
Reſtore them their exiſtence:—they have mourn'd,
In darkneſs and deſpair;—thy countenance
Gives them the light of hope, reſtores their being,
Sole being, that th' aſpiring progeny
And wives of kings ſhould know.—Yes, royal Capet,
I come to hail thee with the gladſome tidings.

King. Deluſive viſions—baniſh all thine hopes.
My faithful ſervants have ignobly fall'n,
By hands of vile aſſaſſins; and their king
Follows this hour, and leaves the wretched ſtate,
A diſmal theatre, where Robeſpierre,
And his infernal comrades paramount
Shall act their tragedies.—Look up; my child,
My daughter;—thou art chang'd, ſince laſt theſe eyes
Beheld thy graceful form—how pale and wan!

P. Royal. Thus let me claſp thee, never more to part.

King. Indeed, I ſee, I feel, my ſuff'ring angel,
There is a ſad prophetic verity
In what thou ſay'ſt. We ſhall, indeed, be join'd,
And that full ſoon, no more, no more to part.

Queen. Look down, thou king of kings, thou god of juſtice.
Send thine avenging ſpirit—

King. Do not curſe,
Nor make thy god, accomplice with his creatures,
In deadly paſſions. O, were heav'n vindictive,
What doom were ours!—Hear thou a diff'rent pray'r.
O ſpare my people, heav'n,—may beaming truth
Pervade miſguided ſouls, and peace, and order,
The reign of reaſon, and of equal law,
And humble piety poſſeſs the land.

Queen. And ſhall I ſee theſe beings mark'd for ſcorn,
And thee for death? But vengeance is at hand.

Daup. Nay, mother, why is this; for long, long months,

My father has been abſent—now, he comes,
And you would chide him from us. Bleſs me, father.

King. My child, my child, may god relent and bleſs thee.
His hand is heavy on thy little head.—
Arm him with fortitude to bear his doom.
For aid, or hope, or pity, from mankind—
Vain, vain dependance!—This—this laſt embrace—
My mortal hour is come. I go, before thee,
To ſeats of happineſs, where thou ſhalt find me,
And dwell for ever, if thy ſoul is ſway'd
By virtue's precepts.

Queen. O, my royal lord,
I muſt not leave thee longer, in the gloom
Of ignorant deſpondence; heav'n relents—
Agents divine are buſy to redeem thee.

King. I know not what thou wouldſt;—thy words portend
Some hope;—thou art deceiv'd, if thou haſt fram'd
Hope of deliverance for thy wretched huſband,
Save by the ſtroke of death. I now muſt give thee
A parting laſt embrace, and claſp my children,
Thus, to my heart, and thus, and then, reſign them,
For ever!—Know, this mercy is indulg'd,
In contemplation of approaching death.

Queen. My lord, my huſband, no, thou ſhalt not die.
The faithful Paris ſhall theſe gloomy walls—

King. Let us not waſte the moments—to thy care,
Need I commend theſe children? Thou, my ſiſter,
Be thou a ſecond parent, join the taſk

Of counſel and inſtruction; let them learn,
To truſt in him who made them, and receive,
With meek ſubmiſſion and exalted zeal,
His hallow'd precepts.—Thou unhappy parent
Of royal ſufferers, o forgive the pangs,
From me, their guiltleſs, but deſtructive cauſe,
On all I love redounding; may'ſt thou ſtand,
At preſent, free from ſelf-accuſing thought,
And, at the future, by the judge of hearts,
In ſight of men and angels, be abſolv'd
From touch of guilt and cenſure.—O my children,
Next to your duty to that gracious pow'r,
That chaſtens us in mercy, o, remember,—
Be firmly join'd in amity; on earth
Your friends, alas, are few; with pious love,
And rev'rent gratitude, regard your mother.—
My ſiſter in maternal care is join'd,—
May ſhe be join'd, by filial piety,
A ſecond mother;—as for thee, my ſon,
Too young to know the horrors of thy ſtate,
Altho', alas, thine infant mind outruns
Thy bounded ſpace, and antedates misfortune,
A man in feelings, but a child in years.

Daup. But tell me, father, when ſhalt thou be free?

King. Soon, ſoon, my child, I ſhall be free as air.

Daup. And wilt thou take me with thee?—I remember,
One night, you woke, and hurried me along;
'T'was frightful dark, and ſaid we ſhould be free,

And then we travell'd ſuch a wondrous diſtance,
Methinks, we ne'er had ſtopt, but ſo it chanc'd,
A ſaucy man came out, and turn'd us back.—
I would that we were free.

King. I ſoon muſt leave thee.—
My ſon, my ſon, revere my parting words,
Imprint them on thy ſoul, if heav'n ſhould call thee
To that laborious and unquiet ſtate,
Grac'd with th' impoſing name of royalty,
Know, that a king, in ſight of heav'n, ſuſtains
A function moſt tremendous; mighty talents
To him are giv'n, and moſt ſevere th' account
Of talents miſapply'd;—He muſt devote
His thoughts, his cares, his dreams, his very being,
For thoſe he rules, and think their happineſs,
His happineſs, his fame, and his ſalvation.

Daup O father, were I king, th' cruel men
That kill'd Laporte ſhould feel that I could puniſh.

King. Thou, as a king, forget I was thy father.
But, as a man, remember, to forewarn thee,
How frail the tenure of humanity.
Forget my wrongs for vengeance, but retain them,
To ſtimulate thy ſoul, with anxious zeal,
To make thy people happy. Would a king
Render himſelf ſecure, and reach the ſummit
Of all the good his pious heart deſigns,
Let him retain a due authority—
Elſe vain the kingly name;—his ſcanty pow'r,

Becomes, like med'cine us'd in ſmall proportion,
Deſtructive, which had life and health diffus'd
Thro' ev'ry member, giv'n with copious hand.—
But well remember, and, if providence
Allows thee means, an hundred fold repay
The care and kindneſs of the faithful few,
That, fall'n on evil days, beſet with dangers,
Preſerv'd their loyalty. I have incurr'd
A ſacred debt—on thee, my heir in woe,
And ſure, I truſt, my heir, in gratitude,
Devolves th' incumbrance.

Daup. Father, I have found
The means to free thee from this gloomy place;—
The ſoldiers love me—I will paſs the guards,
I know they will not cruelly detain me,
And run about the ſtreets, and cry for mercy,
For mercy to a king;—and I will fall
Low on my knees, before that Robeſpierre,
Tho' much I hate him, and before Marat,
And ſwear to love them, if they ſave my father.

P. Royal. Sure death approaches, bear me to my father,
Recline me at his feet and let me graſp
His hand—and breathe—oh! oh!—my parting ſoul.

P. Eliz. The light forſakes her eye, the red her lip,
Her hands are cold and clammy, and the dews
Of death o'erſpread her temples.

King. Bear her hence——
Recline her on the couch—tears, tears be dry'd.—

Vain reſolutions!—daughter, daughter, daughter!—
This ſpectacle has robb'd me of myſelf—
And I would for ſome little ſpace poſſeſs
My faculties unclouded—bear her hence—
For ever from theſe eyes—my child!—my ſiſter!

[*Exit* Princeſs Royal, *ſupported by* Princeſs Elizabeth.

Queen. O Paris, Paris, haſte—no longer mock
My weary hopes—this earth ſhall be my throne,
Here will I ſit, ſovereign, at leaſt, in woe,
And never riſe, until I riſe a queen.——

King. O, cling not to the world, nor cheriſh hope,
Groundleſs and wild.—I know the doom is paſt
Beyond recall of man—theſe idle ſounds
Of hope illuſive more diſtract my ſoul,
Than piercing ſhrieks, of ſorrow and deſpair:—
Peace—hear me calmly—for I would bequeath
Some parting precepts to this little-one—
All that his father and his king may leave him.
Remember, boy, ſhould royalty be thine,
The faithful band, that for thy father bled,
Their parents, and their progeny ſurvive,
To feel thy gratitude—full well I know,
That many, where I chiefly hop'd to find
Love and attachment, in the day of trial,
Forſook their benefactor;—but, my ſon,
Should pow'r be thine hereafter, dim thine eyes
For objects of reſentment; purge thine optics,

With euphraſy, that thou, with ſharpeſt ken,
May'ſt mark the ſubjects of beneficence.
Heav'n ſway'd the heart of many, that I found,
Love unexpected, tho' my wretched ſtate
Precluded preſent good, and flatt'ring hope,
Of future recompence, and honeſt zeal,
That truly ſerv'd me, ſerv'd me, ev'n in dangers
Moſt fatal, which might ſhake the conſtancy
Of friendſhip tried and firm;—but I muſt pauſe,
Leſt ev'n the whiſpers of a grateful tongue
Prove mortal to their theme;—thou may'ſt requite
Their unbought ſervices—but I may ſound
My thanks and praiſes to the good Chamilly,
And pious Edgeworth—they have ſooth'd my hours,
In this abode of horrors, willing victims
Of holy friendſhip, and my Cleri too—
He hath been conſtant, 'midſt ſurrounding dangers.

SCENE IX.

Re-enter PETION, SANTERRE, *and the other Deputies.*

Petion. Louis, of France, excuſe the fatal duty,
Moſt painful to my ſoul—the moments fly——
King. Awhile delay;—I ſhall not hold you long.——
May heav'n forgive my cauſeleſs enemies.

For, ſure, I cannot tax my conſcious thought,
From manhood upward, with delib'rate wrong
To living mortal, ev'n in careleſs hours
Of boundleſs pow'r, proſperity, and eaſe.—
But if I err'd, unknowing, and forgot
My duty to my ſubjects, heav'n and they
Forgive, and pity, me, as I forgive
The fatal efforts of miſguided zeal,
And popular reſentment urg'd to frenzy,
By wild fanatics, or deſigning traitors,
Fatal alike to me.---Thou good ſupreme,
Hope of the hopeleſs, comfort of the wretched,
Behold theſe miſerables,---look, with pity,
On us, unequall'd in our preſent pangs,
As in our glory paſt!---To thee, Maria,
My children I bequeath;---their future life,
If heav'n ſhould pleaſe to grant them life, is mark'd,
For ſuff'rings paſt example: let them learn
To ſeek that pow'r, whoſe all-ſupporting hand,
Alone, is ſolid ſtrength, and feel, and know,
If heav'n ſhould call them to the dangerous ſtate
Of earthly pomp and grandeur, that their worth
Is ſmall, indeed, and their duration brief;
That earthly crowns, tho' baubles they may ſeem,
Dreadfully pond'rous, ſink the heads that wear them
In deepeſt condemnation---but when virtues,
Brighter than jewels, blend their hallow'd rays
Around the circlet, they are paſſports, then,

That give the wearers entrance—to a ſeat
High and conſpicuous 'midſt the bleſt above.—
My child, my child, hope not for good or glory
Fleeting and earthly,—'tis deluſion all.—
Look there—thy god is there—there only ſeek
Thy glory and thy good.—Hopes, aims, and thoughts
Be heav'nward all directed.—View thy mother.—

Queen. No mother, as no wife—all human ties
Are at an end, all names are blotted out,
From nature's book!—deſpair, deſpair, deſpair!—
I hate thee child, the ſight of thee is madneſs,
Begone, begone, begone—take him, in mercy,
And kill him with my huſband, ere he learns,
To feel th' extent of ſorrow—hang not on me,
Away, away, thou wretched little one.

Daup. My father—o my father—let me fly—
Oh give me way—I'll kneel and kiſs the ground,
And kiſs the hands of every citizen.

Petion. What wouldſt thou little one?—

Daup. O give me way—
I fly, to ſave a father and a king.—
Santerre, Santerre, wilt thou be merciful,
And give me way. I fly to ſave my father.—
O take me, in his ſtead; my blood will ſerve
To calm the furious crowd, and when they ſee me,
So young and helpleſs—they will, ſure, be mov'd
With pity, and reſtore my headleſs trunk,
To my poor parents—poor I now muſt call them.—

Sant. Reſtrain that child. He talks us from our purpoſe.

Daup. Why, would they kill my father, let me hence
I'll range about the ſtreets and raiſe the people:
I'll find ſome loyal hearts to pity me,
Off, let me paſs—I fly to ſave my father.—

[Dauphin *runs out.*

King. A ſacred inſpiration fills my breaſt—
I hail him king of France.—The depths of time
Are rich in mighty things; the minutes toil
With a prodigious birth, that ſhall confound
The wond'ring world.—

Queen. Two days—two days delay.—

King. Speak'ſt of delay?—thy reaſon is diſturb'd
Time flies—it bears me from thee—paſs two hours—
And I am number'd with my anceſtors,
That in the tomb repoſe.

Queen. The tomb—the tomb—
Oh, mercy, mercy!—Louis—king of France.—

Petion. With grief of ſoul we treſpaſs—but our miſſion
Prohibits more delay.

King. All gracious heav'n,
That, for wiſe purpoſes, beyond the ken
Of human foreſight, hath ordain'd for me
This lot of ſuff'rance, o ſuſtain my ſoul,
To bear it royally—let no baſe ſymptom
Of human weakneſs ſtain my parting hour!
I will not cry farewell—this laſt embrace—
Where are my children?—raiſe her, life forſakes

The languid frame---'tis vain---I muſt be gone---
The voice of heav'n itſelf has call'd me from thee.

Queen. Thus, thus, I claſp him; break my circling arms---
Break ev'ry limb, and tear me, joint, by joint;---
The cords of life, each agonizing nerve,
In dying efforts, ſhall around him twine;
And ye muſt break them all---relentleſs monſters---
Ye loath'd deteſted fiends, in human form.

Petion. O ſcene of horror—'tis a dreadful function.

Queen. To death, to death—death on a ſcaffold.—Monſters—
Aſſaſſins!—hell-hounds!—is he not your king?—
Fall down with reverence.—Hah!—in ſavage joy—
Ye mock my rage—ſecure in villainy—
Vile ſacrilegious things.—He ſhall not go.—
Thus will I hold him—thus—will grow upon him.—
With theſe ſtrong claſps, thus grov'ling on the earth.—
Hew off theſe hands, and tear me, mangle me.—
Another trophy, ſend my gory head,
To ſpeak your clemency, and join Lamballe.

King. Spare me, Maria, thy convulſive feelings,
Thy dreadful agonies, unman my ſoul—
The cup, indeed, is bitter—ſo ſupport her—
Seek for our children, bring them to her arms—
Convey me to the ſcaffold, ere ſhe wakes—
One look—one parting look—farewell, for ever.

[*Scene cloſes.*

SCENE THE LAST.

PARIS, *with* GASTON, *wounded and bleeding.*

Gaſton. Vain, vain our hopes, all avenues beſet
With murderous bands.—The fierce pariſian throng,
That wield the fatal pike, the fiery cohorts,
From ſouthern France. With theſe the marſhall'd ord'nance
Commands the ſtreets, and, with its iron throat,
Enjoins ſubmiſſion to the fatal doom.

Paris. Eternal curſes blaſt the trembling cowards!—
Not one would follow, when we gave the ſignal,
And loudly cry'd "o pardon for your king!"
All panic-ſtruck---all motionleſs, as ſtatues,
Speechleſs and pale---an hundred loyal men,
Joining, with timely voice, our honeſt cry,
Had ſav'd their ſovereign---o 'tis loſt, 'tis loſt—
For ever loſt---the glorious great occaſion!

Gaſton. Thou know'ſt I follow'd with a mind reſolv'd,
And firmeſt tone, when all our baſe aſſociates
Had left us to our fate—'till preſſing onward—
To gaze upon my king, and catch his eye,
The pikemen ſmote me, lifeleſs, then, I fell,—
And when I wak'd——

Paris. Oh, who can bear the thought?—
Sacrilege, ſacrilege! The fell blow is ſtruck—
Oh France for ever curſt, thy monarch bleeds.—
But rouſe, my friend, our mighty grief demand
Not tears alone and liftleſs dumb deſpair,
Deeds, deeds muſt ſpeak our ſorrow; trait'rous blood
Shall expiate the land.—Thou, to the Bretons,
With providence thy guide; and I, where heav'n
May call my wand'ring ſteps: for well I know,
This arm ſhall be illuſtrious, by ſome act,
Of mighty daring —The revolving hours,
With awful changes fraught, mature the means,
That, from th' abyſs of abject miſery,
Exalt our youthful king, to pow'r and freedom,
And place th' imperial ſceptre in his hand.

[*Exeunt.*

THE END.

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AUG

POSTSCRIPT.

THERE is not, perhaps, an event recorded in the page of hiſtory, that leads to ſuch ſerious and important reflections, as the tragical fate of Louis the ſixteenth, a prince, on whoſe head, the ſins of his fathers have been moſt ſeverely viſited. In the foregoing drama, I have attempted to delineate this affecting and awful ſtory. The reader need not be informed, that this work is haſtily written, but the good intentions of the author, will, I hope, atone for the manifold defects of the compoſition. The candid reader will allow, that if I had adopted the precept of Horace, *nonum prematur in annum*—much of that energetic feeling, which attends the tranſactions of the moment, would have evaporated, and my production would have loſt in intereſt what it might have gained in correctneſs.

I muſt beg leave to acquaint the ſubſcribers to my poetical works, that the whole copy of my poems had

been arranged for the preſs, and very nearly printed off, long before I formed the idea of writing a drama, on the ſubject of Louis the ſixteenth, ſo that this latter production could not have found a place in theſe volumes, without deranging the whole plan of the edition :—however, I have printed it on the ſame paper, and in the ſame manner with my poetical works, to accommodate ſuch of my ſubſcribers as may wiſh to bind it, with my other poems.

I was much mortified, at being unable to publiſh my poems as early in the year, as I propoſed; the delay equally unavoidable, and unforeſeen, was partly occaſioned, by the ſlowneſs of engravers; partly, by a diſappointment with reſpect to paper, which I had beſpoke in England, and which was detained there, by want of convoy, many months later, than I might reaſonably have expected. All difficulties are now ſurmounted, the letter preſs is nearly finiſhed, and I think, I may promiſe with confidence, that the work will be ready, to make its appearance, in the courſe of two months.